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History of The Sikhs & Their Religion

Volume I
The Guru Period
(1469-1708 CE)

edited by
Kirpal Singh & Kharak Singh

DHARAM PARCHAR COMMITTEE
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SRI AMRITSAR

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HISTORY OF THE SIKHS AND THEIR RELIGION

Editors
KIRPAL SINGH
KHARAK SINGH

Assistant Editor
VERPAL SINGH

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FOREWORD TO THE SECOND REVISED EDITION

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar has been receiving lot of complaints regarding distortion and misrepresentation in the history of Sikhs, especially in the Guru period. Keeping in view this long standing requirement, SGPC, Amritsar has taken initiative to get a project to write the history of Guru Period according to the contemporary resources and in accordance with the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. The Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, with the help of different experts in Sikh history have prepared this volume. Its first edition was published in 2004, which has been exhausted.

The present volume is the first installment of this project. Going through the various chapters and a lengthy list of references which followed these chapters, one could get an idea of the input that has gone into it.

I wish to record my sincere appreciation of valuable contribution made by each author, member of the team as well as the hard work put in by the editors. They have succeeded in presenting Sikh history as unfolding of the philosophy and way of life preached by Sri Guru Nanak Dev.

It is a landmark in Sikh historiography. I have no doubt it will be received with the enthusiasm by all historians as well as reading public.

In history one can never write the last word. Any suggestions for improvement will be welcomed and considered for incorporation in subsequent editions.

Avtar Singh
President
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee
Sri Amritsar

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I am happy that the first volume of the series is seeing the light of the day. It is a landmark in Sikh historiography and fills a big vacuum. I have no doubt it will be received with enthusiasm by all historians as well as reading public alike. I hope the team of historians will continue the good work and we look forward to the remaining four volumes which are in the pipeline to follow in quick succession, to bring the Sikh history up to date.

In history one can never write the last word. This is the first attempt. Any suggestions for improvement will be welcomed and considered for incorporation in subsequent editions.

Amritsar
November 1, 2003

Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee

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Avtar Singh
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Sri Amritsar

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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr BALWANT SINGH [B.S.] : Working as a Professor in the Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. He is a distinguished scholar and author of over fifty research papers which have been published in leading journals of national and international repute. Amongst his well-researched books are *Parmukh Sikh té Sikh Panth* and *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition : Myth and Reality.* He has delivered seminars at leading universities of North America on invitation.

Dr DALBIR SINGH [D.S.] : Professor in the Department of History in the Punjabi University, Patiala. He has contributed about forty research papers in the subject of Sikh history, religion, art and architecture. His well-known works are *Sikhism : Origin and Development* and *Evolution of the Sikh Institutions.*

Dr DHARAM SINGH [D.S.] : Professor and Head of Department of Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala, Dr Dharam Singh is a distinguished scholar and author of many research papers and books on Sikh history and philosophy. His well-known works include *Sikhism : Norm and Form.*

Dr GURMUKH SINGH [G.S.] : Dr Gurmukh Singh is a well-known authority on the subject of Sewapanthis. He is presently working with the Department of Languages, of the State of Punjab. He has to his credit several published articles and books. His most well-known work is *Sewapanthian di Punjabi Sahit nu Dén.*

Dr HARNAM SINGH SHAN [H.S.S.] : Formerly Professor and Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Dr Shan is a known scholar of Sikhism, and has to his credit many published papers and books on Sikh religion and history as well as culture and literature of Punjab.

Dr JODH SINGH [J.S.] : Head of Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi

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University, Patiala, Dr Jodh Singh is a distinguished scholar of Sikh theology. He has authored many papers on various theological aspects of Sikh precepts and concepts. Dr Jodh Singh has to his credit, besides many other books, the English translation of *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas.

Dr KHARAK SINGH [Kh.S.] : Founder Secretary of Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, Dr Kharak Singh is the author of several research papers on Sikh Studies and editor of many books, amongst which are *Recent Researches in Sikhism*, *Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies*, *Sikhism : Its Philosophy and History*, etc. He was the founder of the prestigious research journal *Abstracts of Sikh Studies* and remained the editor from it's inception in 1991 till January 2000, and from 2003 to 2008 till his passing away.

Dr KIRPAL SINGH [K.S.] : Founder Head of the Oral History Cell of Punjabi University, Patiala. Dr Kirpal is a distinguished Sikh historian. He has authored about thirty books on Sikh history in English, Punjabi and Persian languages besides presenting innumerable research papers at international seminars and symposia on history. Dr Kirpal Singh has many books on the partition of Punjab in 1947 to his credit. Amongst his pioneering works on history of the Guru period are *Janamsakhi Parampara* and *Perspectives on Sikh Gurus*.

Principal SURJIT SINGH[S.S.] : Formerly the Director of the SGPC Sikh History Research Board and Sikh Reference Library. Prof Gandhi is a renowned scholar of Sikh history. One of the main contributors to the four volume *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* he is the author of numerous research papers as also author of many path-breaking works on Sikh history. Amongst his books are *History of the Sikh Gurus*, *Struggle of the Sikhs for Sovereignty*, and *Sikhs in the Eighteenth Century*. Prof Gandhi is at present the Principal of Akal Degree College, Sangrur.

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PREFACE

Need for a comprehensive and accurate historical account of Sikhs and their religion, written by those intimately acquainted with Sikh religion, has been felt for a long time. It has often been remarked that Sikhs were most of the time engaged in creating history, and had little time to record it. This is to some extent true for the period up to the end of the eighteenth century. But the statement is no more valid for the subsequent period when the Sikh rule under Maharaja Ranjit Singh was firmly established in Northern India.

Most of the earlier attempts at writing a systematic history of Sikhs were made by non-Sikhs. Few of them had access to the material available in Gurmukhi on the lives of the Gurus and the Sikhs. Hardly any of them adequately understood the teachings of the Gurus and the spirit that inspired the Sikhs. Most of them were, in fact, motivated by considerations other than unbiasedly recording the history of the *Panth* or its founders. For example, when the East India Company under Lord Ochterlony sponsored a history of the Sikhs and commissioned Buté Shah for the purpose, their main aim was to question the legitimacy of the Sikh rule in the Punjab. Seeing this Ratan Singh Bhangu, who subsequently wrote the invaluable *Panth Parkash*, approached Capt. Murray, Company's representative at Ludhiana and in charge of the project, and expressed his concern over the selection of Buté Shah for the purpose thus :

> This *maulvi* (Buté Shah) is a Musalman.
> How can he state the glory of the Sikhs ?
> I explained the situation to Murray who showed me his manuscript.
> On going through it I remarked : 'He has not told the whole truth'.[1]

The above apprehension is confirmed by the brief review of some of the attempts, made from time to time, by earlier historians including some well-meaning scholars, given in the following paragraphs.

J. D. Cunningham

Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs* (1849 CE) was one of the earliest attempts by

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English writers, the first one being by James Brown whose work appeared in 1779 CE. The author is known for his generally objective approach, which annoyed his British masters, his own countrymen. The author had lived among the Sikhs for about eight years during a very important period of their history. And it is to this fact that the genesis of his *magnum opus* is to be traced.[2] 'The book possessed one quality which in the view of the Governor General of the day, the Marquis of Dalhousie, rendered the publication of it a crime. It told the whole truth — the unpalatable truth, regarding the First Sikh War; it exposed the real strength of the Sikh army; the conduct of and negotiations with the Sikh chiefs.'[3]

The author himself was aware of his favourable impression among Sikhs. He says :

> It has been remarked by some public critics and private friends that the author leans unduly towards the Sikhs, and that an officer in the Indian army should appear to say he sees aught unwise or objectionable in the acts of the East India Company and its delegates is at the least strange.[4]

While his account of the First Anglo-Sikh War is quite reliable, he committed serious errors in his treatment of the earlier period, particularly the lives of the Gurus, largely due to his ignorance of the Sikh doctrines. The following examples will illustrate the point :

a) On page 41, he quotes Sri Guru Nanak Dev : " 'The rights of strangers,' said he, 'are the one the ox, and the other the swine, but *Pirs* and *Gurus* will praise those who partake not of that which hath enjoyed life.' " This translation of the Guru's couplet :

Haq paraya Nanaka os suar os gayé.
Gur pir hama ta bharey ja murdaar na khayé[5]

is wrong and utterly misleading. The correct translation is :

Saith Nanak : To grab what is another's is evil,
As pig's flesh to the Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu.
The preceptor for his follower shall intercede,
Only when the latter has eaten not carrion.[6]

b) On the same page 41, he says about Sri Guru Nanak Dev : "His reform was in its immediate effect religious and moral only; ... "
He has obviously failed to grasp the whole-life nature of the Guru's religion.

c) On page 51, he writes : "Hargobind became a follower of the Emperor Jehangir ... ... On the death of Jehangir in 1628 CE Hargobind continued in the employ of the Mohammedan Government."
Apparently, Cunningham did not verify his statement. Sri Guru Hargobind fought four (Hari Ram Gupta says six) major battles with the imperial forces. How could he be their employee ?

d) Similarly his uncharitable remarks on page 57, "Guru Tegh Bahadur followed the example of his father with unequal footsteps, and that, choosing for his haunts the wastes between Hansi and the Satluj, he subsisted himself and his

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disciples by plunder, in a way, indeed, that rendered him not unpopular with the peasantry" are utterly baseless and obviously borrowed from sources hostile to the Sikh movement.

e) Cunningham translates the quotation from *Bachittar Natak 'Sir dia, Sirr na dia'* as 'He had given his head, but not his secret'. This is wrong because *Sirar* (not *Sirr*) means 'resolve' or 'determination' and not 'secret'.

Max Arthur Macauliffe

Macauliffe's *The Sikh Religion*, published in 1909 CE in six volumes, is regarded as the most authentic account of the lives of the Sikh Gurus. He was persuaded by leading Sikhs of his time to resign his position with the Indian Civil Service to produce a reliable history of the Gurus in English and an accurate translation of their *bani*. The purpose was to undo the mischief of Ernest Trumpp, a German missionary who had been commissioned earlier by the India Office of the British Government to translate the Sikh scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Trumpp knew Sanskrit and Sindhi and had elementary knowledge of some other Indian languages also, but his knowledge of Punjabi and the dialects used in *Gurbani* was far from adequate. Some local *gianis*, who understood *Gurbani* and were employed to assist him, were outraged by his arrogant behaviour and his lack of respect for the Sikh scripture, and left him when he started smoking in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is surprising that he continued the job without their vital and indispensable help. No wonder, the result was catastrophic. According to Max Muller, "it turns out that Dr Trumpp was by no means a trustworthy translator".[7]

Trumpp's work was rejected by the *Panth*, as outrageous and malicious. Macauliffe spent several years on his assignment, and secured the assistance of erudite scholars like Bhai Kahn Singh of Nabha, Giani Dit Singh, Bhai Hazara Singh, Bhai Sardul Singh and Bhai Vir Singh. Macauliffe's work was welcomed in all quarters. It gave a reliable account in English of the lives of the Gurus, based on meticulous, though sometimes exaggerated, Sikh oral tradition. His translation of the selected *Banis* of each Guru is unsurpassed in accuracy and beauty of language.

It was largely through him that essence of Sikh religion was introduced to the western world. He says in the Preface : "I bring from the East what is practically an unknown religion. The Sikhs are distinguished throughout the world as a great military people, but there is little known even to professional scholars regarding their religion."[8] He sums up the moral and political merits of the Sikh religion :

> It prohibits idolatry, hypocrisy, caste exclusiveness, the concremation of women, the use of wine and other intoxicants, tobacco smoking, infanticide, slander, pilgrimage to the sacred rivers and tanks of the Hindus; and it inculcates loyalty, gratitude for all favours received, philanthropy, justice, impartiality, truth, honesty, and all the moral and domestic virtues known to the noblest citizen of any country.
>
> The illustrious author of the *Vie de Jesus* asks whether great originality will again arise or the world be content to follow the paths opened by the daring creators of ancient

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ages. Now there is here presented a religion totally unaffected by Semitic or Christian influences. Based on the concept of the unity of God, it rejected Hindu formularies and adopted an independent ethical system, ritual, and standards which were totally opposed to the theological beliefs of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's age and country. As we shall see hereafter, it would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or to a more comprehensive ethical system.[9]

While eulogizing Macauliffe's contribution, it must be pointed out that he too has given twist to Sikh history in favour of British empire. This is clear from some of the so-called prophecies highlighted by him, without any historical evidence worth the name. Note the following :

A few of the advantages of the Sikh religion to the State may be here enumerated. One day, as Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was in the top storey of his prison, the Emperor Aurangzeb thought he saw him looking towards the south in the direction of the Imperial *zenana*. He was sent for the next day, and charged with this grave breach of Oriental etiquette and propriety. The Guru replied, 'Emperor Aurangzeb, I was on the top storey of my prison, but I was not looking at thy private apartments or at thy queens. I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down thy *purdas* and destroy thine empire.' Sikh writers state that these words became the battle-cry of the Sikhs in the assault on the mutineers in Dihli (Delhi) in 1857, under General John Nicholson, and that thus the prophecy of the ninth Guru was gloriously fulfilled. When it was represented to Sri Guru Gobind Singh that a Mohammedan army would eventually come to overpower his Sikhs, he replied, 'What God willeth shall take place. When the army of the Mohammedans cometh, my Sikhs shall strike steel on steel. The Khalsa shall then awake, and know the play of battle. Amid the clash of arms the Khalsa shall be partners in present and future bliss, tranquillity, meditation, and divine knowledge. Then shall the English come, and, joined by the Khalsa, rule as well in the East as in the West. The holy English shall possess great power and by force of arms take possession of many principalities. The combined armies of the English and the Sikhs shall be very powerful, as long as they rule with united councils. The empire of the British shall vastly increase, and they shall in every way obtain prosperity. Wherever they take their armies, they shall conquer and bestow thrones on their vassals. Then in every house shall be wealth, in every house religion, in every house learning, and in every house happiness.'[10]

Syad Muhammad Latif

In his *History of the Punjab* (1891 CE), Latif devotes the major part of the book to Sikhs. Part III, IV and V (pages 240-644) cover the Sikh history after a brief coverage of the earlier period in Parts I & II (pages 1-239). He was Extra Judicial Assistant Commissioner of Gurdaspur. He was a loyal servant of his British employers and his eulogizing the British rule in Punjab tantamounts to sycophancy. He gives the impression that the Sikhs welcomed the liquidation of their empire of Punjab and its annexation by the British. He says :

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> But in no part of this great Empire was British rule received with more genuine satisfaction than in the country of the Five Rivers. With a manly and calm resignation, the disciples of Govind, beaten in a fair fight, cheerfully submitted to their conquerors.[11]
>
> The aggressive policy adopted by the Sikhs towards the paramount Power of India, compelled the latter to take up arms against them. The country was conquered; but, generosity prevailing over policy, the victors restored to the recognised heir to the throne, the territories which they were entitled to hold by right of conquest. The Sikh ministers and Darbar, however, violated the treaty; and the *Khalsa* army, rising up in arms, waged a fierce war to destroy the benefactors of their race, whose clemency alone had saved them from utter annihilation. The violators of the treaty were punished, and the province was absorbed into the British Empire, under the administration of Lord Dalhousie. The conquered nation, whose own acts had invited conflict which thus terminated in its downfall, was considerately, nay, generously, treated by the victors. British statesmen respected the fallen fortunes of the Sikhs, and, by a policy of combined vigour, and conciliation, achieved those great victories of peace which will ever reflect honour on the British name. The names of the famous Lawrences, worthy choice of Lord Dalhousie's benevolent policy, are inscribed in characters of light on the frontispiece of the History of India, among those of the illustrious British heroes and statesmen to whose energy, talents and diplomatic skill, England owes its possession of her empire.[12]

We have now overwhelming evidence to contradict this version which is clearly actuated by a desire on the part of the writer to be acceptable to his masters. Besides, there are quite a few factual errors. For example, on p. 246, he says : The descendants of Sri Chand are *Nanakpotras* or descendants of Nanak." As we know, Sri Chand was a celibate. He never married, and had no children. Latif also repeats the mistake of Cunningham when he says that Guru Hargobind entered the service of Jehangir as a military leader.[13] Baba Budha is shown as 'a notorious free-booter' converted by Guru Hargobind.[14] It is a well-known fact that Baba Budha became a disciple of Sri Guru Nanak Dev at a very young age, in his early teens. Also Sri Guru Hargobind is shown to have died at Kartarpur rather than Kiratpur while living in the house of Baba Budha.[15] However, Baba Budha had died in 1631 CE, nearly fourteen years before the demise of Guru Hargobind.

Hari Ram Gupta

History of the Sikhs (1984 CE) by Hari Ram Gupta, is an important milestone in Sikh historiography. He started his work from the eighteenth century of Sikh history and subsequently wrote the lives of ten Gurus as well as the later events up to the fall of the Sikh rule. His *magnum opus* was, however, on the *misl* period. Hari Ram Gupta was not a Sikh, but he showed genuine respect for the Gurus and admiration for the Sikh heroes who dominated the history during this period. He says :

> The Sikhs are the most interesting people in the whole of India. They appear on the

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stage of life everywhere and in every walk of life as men of action. The hidden spirit and potential energy of a Sikh gives him a peculiar dignity. A Sikh believes that God is always present with him. This feeling has not only made him adventurous, but also bold and fearless. He can dare anything under the sun in the name of God, Guru and the Granth. The story of rise and development of Sikhism is one of the most stirring and striking chapters in world history. It is a people's movement based on democracy, secularism and socialism without any barrier of caste, colour or country.[16]

Hari Ram, however, shows Sri Guru Nanak Dev as a part of the *bhagti* movement with which the radical *bhagats* like Chaitanya, Ramanand, Jaidev, Mira Bai, Surdas, etc. are associated. The *bhagti* movement, as we know, propagates dichotomy of spiritual and temporal life, and is inclined towards asceticism and passive resignation from life. Hari Ram failed to see that Sri Guru Nanak Dev and his successors preached a whole-life religion and active participation in life, and laid emphasis on altruistic deeds and struggle for justice for all without discrimination based on caste, creed, colour or gender. It was this difference that distinguishes the Gurus from the radical *bhagats*, and which brought about an unprecedented socio-political and spiritual revolution and establishment of an egalitarian rule under the *Sarkar-é-Khalsa* in the Punjab and the surrounding areas in the north of India from Delhi to Jamrud.

Other Studies

In addition to the above major studies there have been a number of other Western scholars (besides Cunningham & Macauliffe) who have contributed towards Sikh historiography in varying degrees. McGregor was perhaps the first to write a complete history of the Sikhs, starting with Sri Guru Nanak Dev to the capture of Kangra by the British, which was published in 1847 CE. John Kaye, who reviewed it, describes it as 'a nondescript performance, a graft of history upon a stock of personal narrative, the one ever destroying the vitality of the other'.[17]

Among others mention may be made of George Forster and Malcolm. The former gave a short but well connected account of the Sikhs in the form of a detailed letter written in 1783 CE. The latter (John Malcolm) is known for his *Sketch of the Sikhs*. Malcolm came to Punjab in 1805 CE, when he had an opportunity to collect a lot of material on Sikhs, which he compiled hastily in the above *Sketch*. His purpose was that 'it will be useful at the moment when every information regarding Sikhs is of importance'. He hoped that "it may, perhaps, stimulate some person, who has more leisure and better opportunities to accomplish that task which I once contemplated."[18]

The material he collected included a copy of the *Adi Granth*, some Persian books on the Sikhs, *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*, *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas, the *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Bala, etc. He also had the services of a Nirmala Sikh priest (Atma Ram) at his disposal. Malcolm was able to collect more authentic information on Sikhs than any earlier Western writer. His sympathetic treatment of the material has further added to the merit of his work. For these reasons his *Sketch of the Sikhs* is considered as the foundation of any serious understanding of the history, culture and religion of the Sikhs. It seems that

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subsequent historians, including Cunningham, relied heavily on it.

Summing the Western tradition, Darshan Singh says, "Majority of Western writers have represented Sikhism as a response to the prevailing disorderly and chaotic religious conditions in India. In this respect, they emphasized the reformatory character of Sikhism. According to their assessment, Sikhism aimed at synthesizing the positive elements from both the Hindu and Islamic traditions, having universal appeal and validity. Beyond this point they failed to perceive the originality of the vision and mission of Sri Guru Nanak Dev."[19]

Duncan Greenlees, however, like Macauliffe, is an exception to the above conclusion. His *The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib* includes a very lengthy introduction running to 198 pages. The author is of the opinion that the history of the Sikh Gurus and the Khalsa *Panth* is an indispensable part of their religion. "The Sikh religion," he says, "has never been a philosophy of books, of theorists, but a discipline of life, an ideal of brotherhood inspired by passionate devotion to the highest, guided by the example of the Guru's own life, and interpreted with life history of the Guru Khalsa *Panth*. Sikh history cannot be divorced from Sikh philosophy; it is its very life-blood."[20] Keeping the above in view the author has furnished the life history of the Sikh Gurus and the struggle of the Khalsa *Panth* in the lengthy introductory essay.

It should not be inferred from the above that the Sikhs neglected their history altogether. In fact, Sri Guru Nanak Dev himself frequently refers to the conditions prevailing in his times and major historical facts. Bhai Gurdas wrote a lengthy *var* listing major events in the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. He has also given a list of prominent Sikhs of his time in another *var*. Various *Janamsakhis*, although somewhat different in approach, are a reliable source of the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* (Kavi Sohan Singh), *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin* (Sukha Singh), *Mehma Parkash* (Sarup Das Bhalla), are attempts, although not accurate at places, to record the life history of the Gurus in Punjabi verse.

Panth Parkash (Ratan Singh Bhangu), *Nanak Parkash* and *Gurpartap Suraj Granth* (Bhai Santokh Singh) and *Panth Parkash* (Giani Gian Singh) are classical epics on Sikh history in Punjabi verse.

Among the later attempts, mention must be made of the *History of the Sikh Religion* by Khazan Singh, published in 1914, which covers the period from Sri Guru Nanak Dev to the end of the Sikh Rule.

The period of systematic historiography, however, begins with Karam Singh Historian in early twentieth century. Dr Ganda Singh and Dr Kirpal Singh carried forward this tradition. Dr Gopal Singh's *A History of the Sikh People*, Khushwant Singh's *History of the Sikhs* and Dr Sangat Singh's *Sikhs in History* are the latest additions to the Sikh historiography.

Most of the works mentioned in this preface are individual attempts and represent their individual views. Barring a few recent publications, they are incomplete in the sense that some cover only the Guru period, while others end with the Sikh Rule. The Western scholars have invariably failed to grasp the essence of Sikh religion and often

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give a biased account of the Sikh history. Also they did not take into account some valuable material that has now become available from Persian and other non-Indian sources.

Another disturbing factor is that most of the World Books and Encyclopaedias carry a distorted picture of the Sikh religion and its history. Sikhs are invariably presented as a sect of Hindus, and Sri Guru Nanak Dev is often shown as a disciple of Kabir. Even at home Sikh history is being distorted by state agencies apart from individual chauvinists from the majority culture. There are highly objectionable and misleading references to the Gurus in the history text books prescribed by the NCERT for teaching in schools. The role of Sikhs in the 1857 uprising, sometimes called the first war of Indian independence movement, has been shockingly derogated. The tremendous contribution of Sikhs in the freedom struggle and their sacrifices in the form of nearly 80% of total deaths and life imprisonments, hardly find any mention in the official accounts. This unfortunate bias could be due to ignorance, but is largely motivated, and needs to be addressed.

During the last few decades, Sikhs have migrated to almost all parts of the world so that Sikh presence is visible in every continent. The unfortunate army attack on the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Sri Amritsar, in 1984, and the atrocities committed by the state on Sikhs subsequently, have led to a keen demand for information on Sikh religion and history.

It was considered necessary, therefore, to produce an authentic and up-to-date history of the Sikhs. On the initiative of the writer of these lines, the SGPC decided to respond to this felt need, and a project report was approved in 1997 at a meeting of the Dharam Parchar Committee held under the chairmanship of Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra. It was to be a cooperative effort, and I was asked to be the coordinator. The objectives of the Project are :

a) To identify distinct periods or phases of Sikh history.
b) To review the primary sources of Sikh history.
c) To examine the existing published material on Sikh history.
d) To discover new source material hitherto not explored.
e) To procure or ensure access to and carefully examine the new material.
f) To carefully study the commonly accepted primary sources of Sikh history.
g) To interpret various events in the light of basic doctrines of Sikhism and to correlate these with *Gurbani*, since Sikh history represents an unfolding of the Sikh ideology.
h) To procure, translate and examine documents in other languages, directly or indirectly related to Sikh history.
i) To point out and contradict common misrepresentation of the role of Sikhs in history.
j) To pay special attention to areas in Sikh history, not adequately covered by earlier historians.
k) To prepare a readable account of Sikh history for the benefit of historians,

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scholars, students as well as the common man, Sikh or non-Sikh.

Following this decision meetings of leading Sikh historians were held and it was agreed that contribution for specific periods of Sikh history should come from those who had worked intensively on those periods, so that advantage could be taken of their specialisation. It was also decided to present the material in five volumes, each representing a distinct period of Sikh history as follows :

Volume I	:	The Guru Period (1469-1708 CE)
Volume II	:	Sikhs in the 18th Century (1709-1799 CE)
Volume III	:	The Sikh Rule (1800-1848 CE)
Volume IV	:	The British Period (1849-1947 CE)
Volume V	:	From 1947 CE to date

In order to ensure a uniformity of approach it was considered necessary for all participants in the project to keep some basic points in mind. These are reproduced below :

1. Sikhism is an independent spiritual, ethical and social system, with a distinct way of life. It is neither a sect of any existing religion nor a syncretism of earlier faiths. Based on Sri Guru Nanak Dev's mystic experience and revelation, it views universe as the visible form of the Creator, and humankind as one race or brotherhood.
2. All the ten Gurus are one in spirit, and Sri Guru Nanak Dev and the successor Gurus expounded the same philosophy. That spirit is now embodied in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.
3. Sikhism is a whole-life religion and recognises no dichotomy of spiritual and temporal life. In fact, side by side with *simran*, it stresses a life of activity, economic as well as social. It decries renunciation, monasticism and asceticism.
4. Sikhism is not the product of the circumstances of a particular situation in history. It was not created to defend or oppose any particular culture or values. It is a universal and eternal religion relevant to all ages and situations. It is a message of eternal love, service and sacrifice, and a way of life in perfect harmony with environment and laws of nature or His *Hukam*.
5. *Miri-piri* doctrine of the saint-soldier philosophy was preached by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, and was not an innovation of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib or Sri Guru Gobind Singh.
6. Sikh history is an unfolding of the philosophy preached by the Gurus. It is necessary, therefore, to keep in mind its doctrines in interpreting the events.
7. Sikhism is a world religion, and frontiers of its influence are expanding rapidly. World needs a rational account of Sikh history. As such, historical facts must be identified and faithfully reproduced. All available material, primary, recent or current, needs to be consulted and presented without bias. While miracles or hagiographic accounts should not be confused with history, such material could be included as opinions of certain individuals.
8. The targeted audience is not only Sikhs, but also readers from other religions

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throughout the globe, particularly the elite and opinion makers. Renowned scholars, philosophising about the emerging world order express radical futuristic thoughts. Predictions include concepts about commonality of fundamental human values and institutions that may evolve to ensure a stable world with a singular civilization. Sikhism could surely play a key role in determining the core of a culture that may pervade the globe. It should be possible to build in prophetic statements that relate the ideals of Sikhism with futuristic paradigm.

Acknowledgements

The credit for the success of this project goes largely to the distinguished President of the SGPC, Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra who initially approved of the Project, and under whose tenure this volume sees the light of the day. Bibi Jagir Kaur, Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi and Prof. Kirpal Singh Badungar, President of the SGPC during the intervening period, also took keen interest in the work. Thanks are also due to the Members of Dharam Parchar Committee who appreciated the need for an authentic Sikh history and supported the Project and to Sardar Manjit Singh Calcutta, Honorary Chief Secretary of the SGPC for expediting the printing of this volume.

The distinguished scholars who have done the real job contributing entries covering specific periods of Sikh history deserve sincere thanks. Editing and presenting a coherent account with such a large number of entries from different participants having different idioms of expression, has been a very demanding job. Dr Kirpal Singh, formerly head of Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, whose outstanding contribution to the discipline of Sikh history is universally recognised, was invited to help in editing. He has done the job creditably. I am indebted to Dr Kulwant Singh, head of the Department of Journalism, Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana, who generously spared his time for vetting the manuscript. Dr Hazara Singh, formerly head of Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, helped in designing the format. His help is gratefully acknowledged. Also acknowledged is the help of Prof D S Kapoor of Arts College, Chandigarh, in preparation of the maps for this volume.

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March 30, 2002
SAS Nagar

Kharak Singh
Member, Dharam Parchar Committee
Project Coordinator & Editor

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The History of the Sikhs is saga of suffering and sacrifice. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, declared the equality of man, "there is no Hindu no Musalman". For preaching his philosophy, he traveled through many countries, when traveling was time consuming and difficult. Sri Guru Arjun Dev and Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, fifth and the ninth Gurus, sacrificed their lives for the freedom of conscience. Sri Guru Gobind Singh the tenth and the last apostle Guru of the Sikhs, sacrificed his four sons, and himself fought to his last breath against tyranny. The non-Sikh writers have seldom done justice in their accounts. The contemporary Muslim writers gave highly bigoted account of their noble deeds. The Western scholars, not familiar with the spirit of the movement, depict history from an entirely different angle. How the Sikh history has been distorted, has been given in detail in the Preface of the First Edition (of this book).

It was, therefore, a dire necessity to present the history of the Sikhs based on reliable resources in the right perspective. There is also another factor, the Sikhs have spread almost to every nook and corner of the world. Consequently, there is a growing interest in the history and culture of the Sikhs. Keeping in view this long-felt need, the Dharam Parchar Committee, SGPC Amritsar sponsored this project for re-writing history of the Sikhs at the instance of Dr Kharak Singh, who has been one of the founders of the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh.

The first volume of this book was published in 2004, which was very well received. It was soon exhausted – thanks to the readers. Subsequently, the book was sent to the Screening Committee of experts (Ghokh Committee of SGPC, Amritsar) for publication of its second edition. The Experts Committee returned the book with certain suggestions, which have been thoroughly discussed by the History Project Committee of the Institute of Sikh Studies. Ultimately, S Gajindar Singh, Editor of *Abstracts of Sikh Studies* (Institute of Sikh Studies' quarterly Journal), and himself an author of books in English, was requested to go through the entire typed script and

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make amends in light of the suggestions made by the Experts Committee as well as the discussion of the History Project Committee. He has done the job meticulously for which he deserves our thanks.

I am grateful to all the contributors who have contributed the chapters in this volume. Thanks are due to the President, Institute of the Sikh Studies for his very valuable cooperation and continued interest in this project.

Kirpal Singh (Dr)
Chairman
SGPC Sikh History Project
Chandigarh

December 20, 2009

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INTRODUCTION

As has been significantly pointed out by E.H. Carr in his lecture *What is History*, that history has to be reinterpreted in every age. He says, "Ultimately history we cannot have in this generation ... ... but we can show the point that we have reached on the road from one point to the other."[1]

Historical research involves interpretation or reinterpretation, elucidation, illustration and explanation of facts in a new significant way or discovery of new source material and its integration with the already known facts of history. Historiography seeks to reexamine life in its entirety. "Historical imagination, historical architecture or span put the object of study in proper perspective, while historical reflection demands correct interpretation of historical forces working in different situations."[2]

It is difficult to reconstruct the history of medieval Punjab especially that of the Guru period (1469-1708 CE). The land of Five Rivers where the Gurus gave their sermons had been the gateway of India in the northwest . Since the times immemorial, it has also been the destination of various migrating tribes. Thus it became a meeting point of various cultures and civilizations. The Aryans first settled in this region, and the Rig Veda was compiled here. Subsequently different denominations like Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism, cult of Siddhas, etc., appeared. But the most important in its impact was the advent of Islam, with an entirely different culture and civilization that clashed with the indigenous values. Before the advent of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, the founder of Sikhism, Islam had the dominant influence. All these religious denominations have been mentioned in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scripture. For proper understanding of the history of the Sikhs, the Gurus and their faith, one has to understand all these cults and creeds.

Another great difficulty in the study of this period is the paucity of contemporary source material. Perhaps the only independent work which is contemporary is the *Dabistan* discovered by Sir William Jones, the founder of Asiatic Society, Calcutta. Besides this, we get stray references in the contemporary Persian sources like *Akbar Nama*, *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*, *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, etc. Similarly, some contemporary references are

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available in Gurmukhi-Punjabi literature. Sri Guru Granth Sahib provides significant information relating to Babar's invasion, and socio-religious life of the people. Similarly, *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas, a Gurmukhi source, refers to some important events of the Gurus' lives. For life history of the ninth and tenth Guru we have to depend on *Bachittar Natak* and Sainapat's *Gursobha* which are contemporary works. Mostly, we have to depend on the tradition for reconstructing lives of the Gurus. Perhaps no religious prophet has left any written record of his life. The major sources of information are the legends preserved in the hearts of the people on which lives of the prophets are constructed. It will not, therefore, be out of place to emphasize the historical significance of tradition as source of history.

In religious historiography, tradition plays a very significant role. Tradition implies "handing down of opinion, beliefs and practices to posterity unwritten."[3] Legend's connotation is "story handed down from generation to generation and popularly believed to have historical basis."[4] A powerful tradition tends to be a legend in the course of time. Therefore, the role of both tradition & legend in historiography is similar and significant. In the *Asiatic Researches*, John Malcolm has significantly remarked : "In every research into general history of mankind, it is of utmost essential importance to know what a nation has to say of itself, and knowledge obtained from such sources has a value independent of its historical utility."[5]

The traditions of the Sikhs constitute what they have to say about themselves. The Sikh traditions, therefore, have to be taken into account for writing history of the Sikh Gurus. According to Jan Vasina, the author of *Oral Tradition*, "the study of tradition occupies a special place in the various kinds of historical sources. The tradition can be divided into the following categories — narratives, legends, proverbs, historical lays, etc. In pre-literate ages people had a highly developed power of memory, and handed down their tradition in a suitable form for transmission by use of proverbs."[6] But tradition becomes most reliable when it is corroborated by some other evidence. In recent years, particularly in the study of history of African societies, the ethno-historians and anthropologists with historical interest, have demonstrated convincingly how tradition can be recorded, collected, checked and utilized for historical purposes.

In olden times there were specialists whose concern was to memorize and transmit the traditions. In ancient India, the verses of the Rig Veda were preserved in memory from generation to generation till the time they were reduced to the written form. In the Rajput states of medieval India, there used to be bards who had committed to heart and recited the important events of the dynastic history of the rulers. In Sikh history, the descendants of Bhatts, whose verses are included in Guru Granth Sahib, have been recording the important dates and events relating to the Sikh Gurus. This type of source material has recently been brought to light.[7]

Just as the tradition of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji can be studied in the *Janamsakhis*, the tradition of Sri Guru Hargobind, the sixth Nanak, and Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Nanak, can be searched in the *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* and *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, respectively. Bava Sarup Das Bhalla was the direct descendant of Sri Guru

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Amar Das, the third Sikh Guru. He compiled his *Mehma Parkash* in 1776 CE, basing his account on tradition of Sikh Gurus prevalent in his family. Baba Sumer Singh of Patna, author of *Gur Parkash*, also belonged to this family. Bhai Santokh Singh's celebrated work, *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, is mostly based on the traditions and anecdotes relating to the Sikh Gurus. It can be proved beyond doubt that Bhai Santokh Singh painstakingly collected the tradition of the Gurus. To cite only one example, his account of the travels of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur is identical with that of *Sakhi Pothi* subsequently discovered by Attar Singh Bhadaur and published by *Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar. The historicity of traditions cannot be lost in ornate poetry, verbosity of expression and superb imagination of similes and metaphors employed.

One of the important works relating to the eighteenth century history of the Sikhs is *Panth Parkash* by Ratan Singh Bhangu. The entire narrative of Ratan Singh is based on the traditions of the Sikhs. He himself writes at the very outset : "Now I write the account of the Sikhs in the way my ancestors have spoken and also as I have heard from the elderly Sikhs of great qualities."[8] About the account of martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh, he writes : "Ratan Singh has written the account after hearing it from his father, who had seen it."[9]

Similarly, some Persian writers of Sikh history have based their accounts on tradition. Diwan Amar Nath writes in *Zafarnama Ranjit Singh* : "The events narrated by the writer were investigated from the elderly contemporary persons."

In this way we find that tradition forms the backbone of initial Sikh history and cannot be ignored in any fair attempt to write the history of the Sikhs, especially their Gurus.

The earliest writings on the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, are available in the form of *Janamsakhis*. The *Janamsakhis* are the traditional life accounts of Sri Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539 CE), written during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in Gurmukhi script. Biography in its modern form wherein it portrays the important events and influences that shaped the life of an individual from his birth to the last day of his life and endeavours to assess the works or deeds, is a literary genre of recent origin. The *Janamsakhis* are different both in form and content. They present the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev either in the form of Platonian dialogues wherein his teachings are highlighted, or in the form of anecdotes or stories showing his greatness.

The first impulse which brought about the stories of great men was based on the elements of wonder and amazement at the marvellous deeds of the heroes. At this time mankind had not developed the critical faculty of discriminating right from wrong. People accepted as true and authentic whatever was repeatedly narrated to them of the deeds of the gods or heroes. It is for this reason that Alfred Lyall states that "the hazy atmosphere marvellous and miraculous obscures all early origin of race and religion and clouds the beginning of history."[10] But this state of affairs did not last long. "Soon the splendid visions which surround the youth of man begin to fade into common daylight of growing civilization. Thus the dry land of authentic history emerges slowly out of the sea of fable until gradually things which appeared natural and acceptable

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to elder generation become incredible or suspiciously improbable. The delight in awe and astonishment is superseded by a taste for accurate thought and rigorous evidence." Toynbee has rightly stated that the "historian's point of view is one of the mankind's more recent acquisitions."[11]

The legend about the great heroes in the past form the earliest source of information. A man who has made his mark upon a generation who overtops the rest by bravery, piety or some peculiar powers of mind or body, becomes among the unlettered folk the source and subject of legend. These legends rescued from oblivion and transmitted to posterity are what could be saved out of flood of deep oblivion. Thus, however exaggerated or complicated a legend might be, it is based on a kernel of truth. At times that kernel may be very small. Sometimes the attending circumstances make the situation complicated. This can be explained by an example from Indian history. In one part of Rajputana the *Minas* (an aboriginal tribe) used to worship the pig. When they took a turn towards Islam, they changed their pig into a saint called Father Adam and worshipped him as such; when Brahmans got influence over them the pig became identified as the mythic *Vrahavtar* of Vishnu. This led to the development of symbolism. The animal fables of Aesop and *Panchtantar* tales are landmarks in the symbolic literature. Since during the medieval period religion was the dominant force, a new type of symbols developed to indicate the spiritual progress of an individual. *Mantkul Tahir* and *Geet Govind* can be quoted as fine specimens of this type of literature during 12th and 13th centuries. Thus while studying any piece of religious literature like that of *Janamsakhis*, one has to keep in mind the contemporary religious literature and its state of development.

The traditions about Sri Guru Nanak Dev's achievements got current when he was still alive. The contemporaries began to talk about his great itineraries, his visit to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, his discourses with *pirs* of Uch and Multan, his religious debates with Gorakhpanthis, *qazis* and *pandits*, etc. This was the starting point of legend formation.

One of the earliest accounts of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's life has been written by Manohar Dass Meharban (1581-1640 CE), son of Pirthi Chand. The historical significance of this *Janamsakhi* has been brought out by the writer of these lines in the introduction while editing this *Janamsakhi* which was subsequently published by Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1962.

Meharban was one of the pioneer *Janamsakhi* writers because methodology followed by him was adopted by subsequent *Janamsakhi* writers. By his intensive study of the verses of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Meharban discovered that the verses reflect certain situations in which these have been composed. He found that Guru's verses represented his long and varied experience which he had acquired by continued travelling. Some of the verses were addressed to particular individuals whose names were mentioned there. For instance there is a specific mention of Bharthari Jogi, Bhai Lalo of Eminabad, Sajjan Thug, etc. In some of the verses technical terms of Muslim theologians, Nath yogis and Siddhas have been used which clearly indicate that those

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hymns have been addressed to Muslim divines and yogis, respectively. The *Babarvani* clearly indicates reference to Babar's invasions, closely following the line of argument mentioned in the verses. Meharban constructed dialogues between the Guru and the persons to whom the verses had been addressed. To this Plato-like dialogues he gave the name of *Gosti*, and such like *Gostis* are numerous in his *Janamsakhi*. Meharban was able to discover in certain hymns local colouring. For instance, when he found that language or words used by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in a verse belong to Multani dialect, he linked it with Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to Multan.[12] Incidently, it may be mentioned here that Bhai Gurdas has stated that the Guru visited Multan. Similarly some of his verses were linked with the *Sakhis* relating to his visit to Rajputana area. Thus, unlike his contemporary author of *Dabistan*, he did not have his biographical account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev on hearsay but on the verses of Sri Guru Nanak Dev which can be called a first rate source of information relating to his life.

Meharban's account describes the travels of the Guru in the most realistic way. Unlike the author of *Puratan Janamsakhi*, he does not bother about separate identity of the long travels of the Guru in different directions like east, south, north and west. The subsequent writers were very particular about these directions, and they mention that the Guru returned from Jagannath Puri to the Punjab in order to indicate the end of his eastern travels. But according to Meharban, the Guru turned towards the South after finishing his eastern travels.[13] This appears to be more likely because a person who might have been keen to visit Southern India would not have returned to the North from Puri without visiting the South. This is further confirmed, when we find a regular pilgrim's route from Puri going to Kanchipuram and other places of pilgrimage in the South. For the first time Meharban linked the eastern and southern travels of the Guru.[14] According to *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi*, the Guru returned from his long travels after twelve years. That also seems to indicate that the Guru had visited Eastern and Southern India in a single itinerary.

After Meharban, the descendants of the sons of Sri Guru Amar Das, the third Nanak, compiled the life histories of the Gurus. Sarup Das Bhalla, the author of *Mehma Parkash*, was the fourth in line from Baba Mohri, as he himself states in the beginning of *Mehma Parkash*.

However, Sarup Das based his account on an earlier account given in Bawa Kirpal Singh Bhalla's *Mehma Parkash* (*Vartak*) written in prose.[15] If we compare the *Mehma Parkash* (*Vartak*) with *Mehma Parkash* (*Kavita*), we find that the sequence of the events narrated and description of events are identical to such an extent that one is easily misled to believe that both the works might belong to the same author. But these are two different works. While *Mehma Parkash* (*Vartak*) was written in 1739 CE, the *Mehma Parkash* (*Kavita*) was written in 1776 CE. Sarup Das has himself given this date in the colophon.

It is very important to note that while giving the account of Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji, the second Nanak, Sarup Das states that Sri Guru Angad Dev got dictated a *Janamsakhi* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev from Bhai Bala. Since this type of statement

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forms the opening para of Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi*, it gives the impression to the reader that Sarup Das might have been influenced by Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi*. Sarup Das writes : "Once Guru Angad asked Bhai Budha to trace a man who had been with the Guru during his travels so that an account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's life could be compiled for the benefit of the Sikhs and to console his followers. At that time arrived Bhai Bala Sandhu who was devoted to Sri Guru Nanak Dev during his travels." Then the author follows the opening paras of Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi* wherein it has been stated that Bhai Bala went to Talwandi to bring the *janampatri* from Sri Guru Nanak Dev's uncle Lalu. Then it is stated that Bhai Bala got dictated the account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Now the question arises that if Sarup Das really believed that a *Janamsakhi* was written by Bhai Bala during the time of Sri Guru Angad Dev then why did he not follow this *Janamsakhi*. His account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev is materially different from Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi*. Apparently, there is an inconsistency. But the colophon of *Mehma Parkash* gives a clue. It has been stated there 'the book of *Mehma Parkash* was started at Kashi and completed at Amritsar'. It appears that Bala's *Janamsakhi* was not available at Kashi. However, before the author was to finish the account of Sri Guru Angad Dev, he migrated to Amritsar where he came across Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi*. He, therefore, incorporated Bhai Bala's name at the end of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's account as also the legend of Sri Guru Angad Dev's having the *Janamsakhi* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev dictated by Bhai Bala.

Gurpartap Suraj Granth

The voluminous work compiled by Bhai Santokh Singh entitled *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, popularly known as *Suraj Parkash*, is the biggest work on the lives of the Sikh Gurus. He collected the traditions relating to the Gurus and put them together in beautiful verse in Braj. He completed his *Nanak Parkash* in 1823 CE and *Suraj Parkash* in 1843 CE.[16] *Nanak Parkash* deals with the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev alone, and is mostly based on Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi*, a later tradition of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. *Suraj Parkash* consists of lives of the other nine Gurus (from Sri Guru Angad Dev to Sri Guru Gobind Singh). This versified account is divided into twelve *rasas* or sections corresponding to the signs of zodiac. The life of tenth Guru is further divided into six *ruts* or seasons corresponding to the six seasons and into two *ains*, the ascending and descending nodes. There are 1152 chapters (*ansu*) in all. Gurus' lives have been divided in *ansus*.

Bhai Santokh Singh's treatment of the subject is of course poetic and with his superb imagination he has made the Gurus seem living and moving in his words. With minutest details and description he makes readers virtually enjoy the company of the Gurus. He would not draw a pencil sketch but present a life size colourful picture. A close study would reveal that he was conversant with the tradition of the Gurus. Despite some shortcomings, the work of Bhai Santokh Singh is the biggest source of information relating to the lives of the Gurus. At places the information given by him can be verified from other sources. For instances, his plan of travels of

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Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur is identical with the plan given in the *Sakhi Pothi*, which proves beyond doubt that he had before him the Sikh traditions when he was writing about the Gurus.

Giani Gian Singh's Approach

Giani Gian Singh (1822-1921 CE) was mainly inspired by the Singh Sabha Movement for writing the history of the Sikhs. Before him there were *Janamsakhis*, *Gurbilas* and *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*. There was no single book dealing with the entire Sikh history. He fulfilled this need by compiling *Panth Parkash* in verse. But he realised that history, if it is to be widely read, must be in prose. He, therefore, wrote in prose a complete history of the Sikhs from the birth of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to the annexation of the Sikh kingdom of Punjab by the British in 1849 CE in several volumes in Punjabi and Urdu. Urdu was the court language of the British Punjab.

In the preface to *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, he eulogizes the study of history and gives a list of books which he had consulted. But the most important sources of information on which he has relied are the oral traditions of the Sikhs. He collected the traditions of the Sikhs by undertaking vast travels. According to Jan Vasina, traditions occupy a special place among the various kinds of historical sources. They are known to be the basis of many written sources too, specially those of classical antiquity and early middle ages. Every tradition has got as its basis a historical fact but it has to be discovered by critical analysis.

Giani Gian Singh did not lay much emphasis on analysis of the traditions, unlike his contemporary Karam Singh Historian. How both differed in their approach can be illustrated by the latter's book entitled *Katak ké Vaisakh*. Dr Trumpp's English translation of Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi* and *Puratan Janamsakhi*, in the preface of his *Adi Granth* translation, sparked a controversy about the date of birth of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[17] A couple of decades later, taking the cue from that Karam Singh wrote the book entitled *Katak ké Vaisakh*, in which he proved that Bhai Bala was a fictitious person. Giani Gian Singh differed with Bhai Karam Singh and hence wrote the following letter to him after reading his book :

> "If some unbelieving critic considers the anecdotes in the *Janamsakhis* baseless gossip, he would find the same position in Hindu *Puranas*, Muslim *Hadis* and Christian Bible, etc. Just as Bhai Gurdas does not mention Bhai Bala, he has also not mentioned in his list of the Sikhs, some prominent Sikhs — like Bhagtu, Behlu, Bhunder, Dyala, etc. He has written those names which are not prominent."[18]

History-writing by Karam Singh

Karam Singh (1884-1930 CE) was the first Sikh historian who attempted to write history on scientific lines. He was always looking for new historical manuscripts. He visited old families and curio dealers, and examined the private collections. He saved a number of manuscripts, *parwanas*, and documents which he has mentioned in his writings. He was able to discover original manuscripts of *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab* which was

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subsequently edited and published by the writer of these lines. He also discovered *Jang Nama* of Qazi Noor Mohammed. It gives an eyewitness account of Ahmad Shah Abdali's seventh invasion. It has been edited and published by Dr Ganda Singh. Besides *Katak ké Vaisakh*, dealing with *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Bala, he wrote *Gurpurb Nirnay*, in which he gave a detailed account of dates of birth, succession and death of all Sikh Gurus. This was one of his pioneering works.

Karam Singh was a pioneer of historical research in the history of the Sikhs. He was the first person to sift through the traditional and legendary accounts for factual information and to introduce the scientific method of investigation based on critical analysis, close examination and verification of different source materials. According to Karam Singh, historical research is the life thread of a nation. By conducting research we can improve our history and add new dimensions to it. Just as history inspires a nation for further progress, similarly research lends new vitality to history. Historical research does not imply only the discovery and collection of new source material. The most important aspect of research is to examine the newly discovered material along with old one and to draw a conclusion.[19]

Karam Singh wrote, "History research has two parts — first, discovery of material, and second, examination and interpretation of that material. The latter is much more difficult than the former. Historians should be researchers and free from all types of prejudices. They should not be narrow-minded so as to be deterred by religious, sectional or sentimental considerations. They should be cool-headed and capable of assimilating the opposite point of view.[20] All these principles are accepted today in the historical research methodology.

Bhai Vir Singh's Portrayal of History

The objective of Bhai Vir Singh was not to construct the past history like a scientific historian. His objective in his own words was that 'old accounts should inspire the people so that they may lead elevated and inspired life. The purpose of writing this (*Bijay Singh*) is an effort to improve the conditions of the Panth.'[21]

Bhai Vir Singh explains his method of writing history in the following words : "Many accounts incorporated in this book (*Bijay Singh*) have come from those elders who are no more here. Both the *Panth Parkash* and *Khalsa Twarikh* and the books of Prinsep, Cunningham, Mohammad Latif, Malcolm, McGregor and some other books have been consulted for which the author is thankful to them. Some accounts have been taken from folk songs. Missing links of the chain of events have been filled up with imagination by the author. There was no time left to conduct researches in the historical sources of the time. Panth stands in dire and urgent need. Therefore, this book has been prepared by mingling of history and traditions with imagination."[22]

Imagination plays a significant part even in writing scientific history. A. J. Pollar writes : "History can never be true to life without imagination. Facts and figures are dry bones — it requires inspiration to clothe them with life and meaning, no accumulation of material, no ransacking of archives, will make a man historian without the capacity

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to interpret and construct."[23] But there is a lot of difference between the use of imagination by scientific historian and romantic historian or historical romancer. The former constructs the past with the help of authentic source material. Where material is not available, he would leave the gap. The latter would, however, compile the narration by means of creative imagination and present the picture without any gap. Bhai Vir Singh belongs to the latter category.

Bhai Vir Singh collected his material of history like a scientific historian. He has tapped every standard source book, he has quoted in his footnotes folk songs depicting the times, anecdotes regarding eminent persons like Kaura Mal and anecdotes of the bravery of the Sikhs in the face of ruthless persecution. But he does not handle this material like a scientific historian. He dramatizes the facts and fills the skeleton of dry facts with flesh and blood.

Dr Balbir Singh writes about Bhai Vir Singh's style in *Kalgidhar Chamatkar*: "Bhai Vir Singh's treatment was different, it was not fashioned on the pattern of chronology. The thread of chronological order was later used by him to string together different articles which were complete and independent in themselves and which at times dealt with one particular set of events. This was a special style. It was not merely penmanship. It was not mechanical at all. It was an organic method peculiar to Bhai Vir Singh, more in keeping with the manner of nature itself."[24]

Bhai Vir Singh wrote a number of tracts which were published by the Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar. In many of these tracts, Bhai Vir Singh had a scientific approach. For instance, in *Tara Singh Shaheed* or *Wadda Ghallughara*, he has given geographical background and detailed account of local traditions about the event. In *Tara Singh Shaheed* he gives the tribal makeup of the areas where Tara Singh lived. It is amazingly rich with the local detail : "There are two villages, named 'Dal' and 'Wan' in the Majha territory. Both villages were inhabited by Buttar *Jats*. Wan was first dominated by *Telis* (oilseed crushers). Subsequently, *Khatris* began to rule over there. On *Khatris'* decline, Buttars of Ichhogil village captured it, and ever since they have been ruling there. Ichhogil situated near the bank of river Ravi and adjacent to village Rania, was famous for its adventurous inhabitants like those of Sarhali. After capturing Rania, the Buttars of Ichhogil also captured its adjacent village Dal. Since Dal and Wan were quite close to one another, they began to be called by the combined name Dalwan. The village Wan had three divisions, *Pattis*. In one of the divisions there lived a *Zamindar* named Chug. He had three sons — Mahi, Jaita and Gurdas. The youngest, Gurdas, took *pahul* in the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He took part in political upheavals in the time of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. He had five sons, Tara Singh, Bhara Singh, Sangat Singh, Nathu Singh and Mathu Singh."[25]

The most monumental of the edited works of Bhai Vir Singh is *Suraj Parkash*. This he edited in fourteen volumes. In the introductory volume he wrote the biography of Bhai Santokh Singh, the author of *Suraj Parkash*. He had to collect information from various sources to construct this biography. In this biography his approach is that of a scientific historian. For the first time he was able to discover several facts of Bhai

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Santokh Singh's life and write them in chronological order. This indicates his understanding of writing a historical biography.

The footnotes of *Suraj Parkash* display Bhai Vir Singh's depth of historical research. While some footnotes are short, others run into several pages. In these footnotes he has discussed and analysed the original sources and compared them with the current traditions. For instance, he has discussed in detail the circumstances leading to Sri Guru Arjun's martyrdom. The versions of *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri* has been analysed and compared with the versions contained in semi-contemporary and later sources. Here he has shown superb historical sense and acumen for historical research.

In *Cries of Outrage* W.H. McLeod writes, "If one is a historian (and this is what I have tried to be) one is required to apply certain range of techniques which will qualify for description of scholarly analysis. It is here a crucial difference opens up between two kinds of historians, the two kinds we find ranged against each other in this battle of understanding of the true nature of Sikh Panth. On one side we find arrayed the historians who put their trust in tradition. These defend the traditions of the Panth, as a result have a large and well integrated version of the Panth's history set out before them. Opposed to the traditionalists are the sceptics, historians who maintain that every fact requires a believable evidence to support it and who in consequence find the established history of the Panth much more restricted."[26]

For study and research, the history of the Sikhs has to be divided in the following periods :

1. The Guru Period (1469-1708 CE)
2. Period of Struggle (1708-1799 CE)
3. The Sikh Rule (1799-1749 CE)
4. The British Period (1849-1947 CE)
5. After 1947 CE

For every period different ranges of research techniques have to be followed. We start with British period of Sikh history. For every important event we have to search first state level record, then national archives — and then records at different levels in England, viz., Old India Office and Public Record Office and Private Papers preserved at different places. For the Ranjit Singh period, historians have to go through Khalsa Darbar records and other Persian records and compare them with British records of the East India Company. One has also to study foreign travellers' accounts, etc. For Sikh history of the eighteenth century, *Panth Parkash* of Ratan Singh Bhangu, a Punjabi source; for Sikh-Maratha relations, the Marathi records; for Sikh-Afghan relations, Sikh-Rohilla relations and Sikh-Mughal history various Persian sources have to be consulted and analysed.

But the most important is the history of Sikh Gurus, which can be reconstructed largely on the basis of tradition, recorded or oral. Where written evidence is available and it is at variance with the tradition, the former should be preferred but keeping in mind the biases of the writer and an explanation of why traditional accounts differ. For example, if Mughal records give an account at total variance with the Sikh tradition,

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then we have to see whether the Mughal account glosses over or twists those facts which show the Mughal court in bad light. Similarly, at places tradition has to be verified and analysed in order to find out the truth. It has been rightly stated by Alfred Lyall that however exaggerated or complicated tradition might be it has kernel of truth in it.[27] That kernel has to be discovered. For instance, Sikh tradition about Sri Guru Arjun's martyrdom is at variance with Jehangir's account of Guru's martyrdom recorded in *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*. Besides these accounts there is another account by Jesuit fathers who were present at Lahore. All these accounts when analysed take one to truth.

Though not explicitly stated McLeod's only concern appears to be the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, the topic of his Ph.D. thesis in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. I had the opportunity to meet late Prof. A.L.Basham and discuss with him certain problems of Sikh history in 1964 CE. A few days later, McLeod came to see me with *Janamsakhi* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev by Meharban, which I had edited and got published. He informed me that he had been instructed by Prof. A. L. Basham who was his supervisor to see me. We discussed certain problems of *Janamsakhi Meharban*. I particularly noticed that McLeod could at that time read Gurmukhi with difficulty.

In order to understand the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, it is essential to understand his verses. In-depth study of his verses would reveal that a particular verse had been composed in a certain situation which has to be understood, and which needs explanation and elucidation. That situation with critical mind can be better understood from the original verse rather than its translation. This language barrier has been a great hindrance for McLeod. In *Puratan Janamsakhi*, there is mention of Raja Samunder whom he has read as "Sham Sunder". In a hymn of Sri Guru Nanak Dev there is mention of Bhai Lallo, the carpenter of Eminabad, whom he has translated as "My Beloved God". He has read it as "Lall".

In order to cover the language barrier to understand the verses of Sri Guru Nanak Dev which was essential for writing the life of the Guru he adopted the method of sceptic approach which he calls "certain range of technique for scholarly analysis". In this process the traditions of Sri Guru Nanak Dev recorded in the *Janamsakhis*, which McLeod calls "tradition of the Panth", have been totally ignored. In modern methodology of history research as evolved by Jan Vasina[28] and Paul Thomsons[29], study of tradition plays a significant part. In this way application of wrong techniques has led to wrong conclusions, like the ones that Sri Guru Nanak Dev did not go beyond Punjab, that *Janamsakhis* are not reliable sources of information, etc. etc.

Sceptic method of McLeod cannot work for writing the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Historians having some faith in religion and spirituality can have better understanding of the mind of the Guru and his verses. Just as the women can understand women better, and people in same craft can better comprehend the mind or the work of their fellow craftsmen, similarly, followers of the Gurus can understand their lives better than the non-followers or agnostics. Here there is no question of

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fundamentalism or secularism. For comprehending the Guru's life and work one has to delve deep in the idiom of the verses of the Guru. Use of tradition in historiography does not make one a traditionalist or fundamentalist.

McLeod's statement that the *Janamsakhi* contained the Panthic tradition is not correct, because *Janamsakhi* writers in most cases were dissenters. For instance, *Janamsakhi Meharban* has been written by *Minas* and *Janamsakhi Bala* was written by the *Niranjania* sect opposed to mainstream of Sikhs.[30] Moreover, his title, viz., *History versus Tradition*, is a misstatement revealing his pre-conditioned mind. According to well-established theories of historiography, tradition is one of the basic sources of history. It is not opposed to history. In order to comprehend the history of Sikh Gurus one must understand the verses of the Gurus as well as traditions of the times of the Gurus. It will be futile to search for record for the lives of Prophets. In record alone McLeod finds a believable evidence, as for him tradition "is not believable evidence". No prophet has left any record whatsoever of their lives. Their record is in tradition which is passed on from one generation to another and which has been preserved in the minds of people.

March 20, 2002 Kirpal Singh
Chandigarh Editor

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VOLUME I
THE GURU PERIOD
(1469-1708 CE)

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1

SRI GURU NANAK DEV
— HIS TIMES —

I. *General Situation*

Punjab, where Sri Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539 CE) was born, has been the matrix of various cultures and civilizations that came in the wake of invasions from as far away as Greece and Mongolia. Situated between the austere slopes of Central Asia and the verdant valley of the Ganges, it has not only borne the brunt of frequent excursions of ambitious adventurers, but besides the Indic, it has also been the recipient of two major streams of religious thought — the Semitic and the Aryan. Proverbially known as "the land of the five rivers" and "the sword arm of India", it has seen the cruel game of gore as well as the conflicts that arose when the Aryan and Muslim cultures came to face each other. The Muslims first established their rule here towards the end of the first millennium, and the advent of Islam brought about the inevitable Hindu-Muslim conflict. Islam and Hinduism prefer different ontologies, modes of worship and ethos to rule human conduct in social framework. The Muslims are strict monotheists, whereas the Hindus profess faith in several deities and believe in idol worship. The relatively equalitarian viewpoint of the Muslims, which perceived all fellow Muslims as equals, came as a challenge to the caste-ridden Hindu society. The Hindus of medieval times worshipped the cow, whereas the Muslims relished beef. The Muslim congregational prayer was radically different from the individual mode of worship among Hindus. Music, a part of Hindu worship in a temple, was forbidden within the precincts of a mosque. Idol worship was central to Hindu religion whereas it was a sin and an anathema to Muslims. In prayer, the Muslims bowed towards the west, the Hindus towards the east. The Muslims, in disdain, dubbed the Hindus as *kafirs*, infidels, whereas the Hindus expressed their hatred by calling the Muslims *malechhas*, the defiled ones. Bhai Gurdas (d. 1637 CE), the first Sikh theologian and the maternal uncle of the fifth Nanak, Sri Guru Arjun Dev, brings out this difference most succinctly : "The Hindus turn to the Ganges, the Muslims to the Kauba in Mecca. The Muslims take to circumcision, while the Hindus stick to their thread and frontal mark. The Hindus worship Ram, they Rahim."[1] J.D. Cunningham

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states : "Custom jarred with custom, opinion with opinion, the public mind became agitated and found no sure resting place with Brahmin or Muslim, with Mahadev or Mohammad."[2] G.C. Narang avers that "the spring of true religion had been choked up by the weeds of unmeaning ceremonies, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and indifference of the people. Form had supplanted the reality."[3] Bhai Gurdas has described the religious conditions, "Leaving aside truth the Brahmins and the Maulanas were fighting over trifles."[4]

The rulers were perpetrating all types of cruelties on their subjects in the name of religion. According to the prevalent notions, the Muslim state was expected to root out heresy and spread Islam. The *Quran* lays down : "Say to the infidel if they desist from their unbelief, what is past is forgiven them. But if they return to it... fight them till strife be at end and the religion be all of God's."[5] It was considered the highest duty of a Muslim ruler to carry on *jehad* by waging war against the infidels (*dar-ul-Harb*) till they were converted to Islam (*dar-ul-Islam*). Only two classes of people were recognised, *ahal-i-Islam*, viz., Muslims, and *ahal-i-Kitab*, that is, those who believed in the revealed book. Christians came in the latter category. The rest of the population was called *zimmis*, who could be given protection and permitted to live against payment of a tax, the *jaziya*. Idolaters had no place in Muslim state; they were to either embrace Islam or face death. Since the vast population of the Hindus was considered to be a threat, the Muslim rulers heaped on them all types of insults and injuries to coerce them to embrace Islam. Forcible conversions became the order of the day. Murray Titus points out that in Muslim theocracy there is no room for catholicity and tolerance. "It must not be forgotten that the very essence of Islam is that it is both a religion and a system of government, a church state."[6]

The orthodox section of the Muslims chafed at the Hanifite doctrine which was officially accepted by the Muslim rulers of India. As Qazi Mughis-ud-Din pointed out to Ala-ud-Din Khilji, it was Abu Hanifa alone who assented to the imposition of *jaziya* on the Hindus; interpreters of other schools believe in the dictum, "either Islam or death."[7] Sultan Mahmud followed this policy. Barani writes, "If Mahmud had gone to Hindostan once more he would have brought under his sword all the Brahmins of Hind who in that vast land are the cause of continuance of laws of infidelity and of the strength of idolaters. He would have butchered the heads of two hundred or three hundred thousand Hindu chiefs."[8]

Besides the imposition of *jaziya*, the Hindus were also forbidden open worship and religious proselytisation. According to Dr Srivastava, during the reigns of Ala-ud-Din Khilji, Firoze Tughlak and Sikandar Lodhi, the Hindus were not allowed to wear fine clothes or ride a horse. They were not allowed to build new temples or repair the old ones. The temple of Keshav Deva at Mathura was razed to the ground by Feroze Tughlak; when it was rebuilt, it was again destroyed by Sikandar Lodhi.[9] According to Bhai Gurdas, "Hindu temples were razed to the ground and at those very places and with the same material mosques were raised."[10]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev, however, decried this type of organised tyranny over a

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section of people. He felt that the Muslims were not serving the cause of their own religion by oppressing non-Muslims. He states :

Hard it is to deserve the name of Mussalman,
Only one truly so, may such be called.
First, must he hold in love the way of the holy,
Like iron on grindstone should he cast off his possessions.
In the way of the Preceptor should he have faith,
And banish illusion of death and life.
To the Lord's will should he be obedient,
With faith in the Creator as compassionate he becomes,
May he be called a Mussalman.[11]

As a result of the policy of religious persecution, the Hindus were oppressed beyond despair. They adopted the ways of the Muslims, but secretly still worshipped their idols, and this dualism resulted in hypocrisy becoming part of their character. Sri Guru Nanak Dev aptly states, "Overtly the Hindus have adopted the ways of the Turks and read the *Quran*, but covertly they worship idols as well."[12]

The aggressive Islamic outlook of the Mughal rulers rudely shook the complacent Hindu mind. The Brahmins, wedded to empty ceremonialism aimed at bewildering the ignorant minds, shrank with fear into the age-old fortress of casteism, and attempted to assert its empty authority on the ordinary people who fell either to the temptations offered by the ruling class, or else to the coercion to which they were subjected by the tyrant. The *sanyasin* ideal, which had held great fascination for the Hindu mind, came to the rescue of the fear-ridden Hindus, for many of them, to escape the responsibilities and oppression of the prevailing times, renounced the world and became ascetics.

A converted person could not be readmitted into the Hindu fold. The Hindus of low caste embraced Islam. Dr Titus has remarked, "Any out-caste man who wished to escape the insults and degradation imposed upon him by his social status, could easily find a welcome freedom by accepting Islam. In this way alone can the large number of so-called low caste Muslims of India, such as weavers, water carriers, leather workers and even sweepers be accounted for."[13]

Bhai Gurdas writes, "There was quite a confusion when four castes and many *ashrams* got crystallized. There were *sanyasis* of different denominations, and yogis had set up twelve paths. The Jangams and Jains indulged in self-deception and mutual bickerings. The Brahmins wrangled on interpretations of *Vedas*, *Shastras* and *Puranas*."[14]

Under the influence of the *varna ashram* ideal many Hindus would renounce the world, and to seek enlightenment, retreat to woods or mountains and spend their lives there. Thus, they shirked the struggle and responsibility to face challenges and lead the people out of the morass. Bhai Gurdas states, "The wise men sporting the garb of Siddhas had hidden themselves in the mountains, when they should have launched the struggle to reform society."[15]

Atmosphere of religious antagonism was accompanied by political uncertainty caused by frequent and quick changes in the Delhi governments. After Timur, Delhi

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was invaded by Khizar Khan, the Viceroy of Lahore, who founded the Sayyed dynasty of Delhi Sultanate. Bahlol Lodhi, founder of the Lodhi dynasty, was formerly the governor of the Punjab, including Dipalpur, Sirhind and Panipat. It was also Daulat Khan Lodhi, the governor of the Punjab at the time of invasion of Babar, who raised the standard of revolt against the rigours and strict court manners of Ibrahim Lodhi and contributed to his downfall.[16] Though the Punjab was under the Delhi kingdom, its governor Daulat Khan Lodhi was the *de facto* ruler of the state. His son, Dilawar Khan, having escaped from Delhi, informed Daulat Khan that the sultan harboured evil designs, and that as soon as he was free from his difficulties, he would turn his attention towards Punjab. To meet the threat, Daulat Khan invited Babar to help him in his designs.[17]

It was a period of political uncertainty, social disintegration and spiritual degeneration in which the people suffered a lot. After the departure of Timur, all semblance of government was destroyed in upper India,[18] and the extent may be gauged from the fact that when Mubarak Shah, the second Sayyed monarch, entered Lahore in 1421 CE, he found the city in ruins. During the reign of Sayyeds, the Turkbachas of Sirhind kept up a continuous opposition, and the situation in Punjab was rendered hopeless by constant intrigues of rival governors, the machinations and adventures of Jasrath Khokar, and the raids of Sheikh Ali of Kabul. As soon as the news of the death of Khizar Khan, the Delhi emperor, reached Punjab, Jasrath Khokar crossed the Beas and the Satluj, plundered the country from the town of Ludhiana to Ropar and marched towards Jalandhar. His designs failed in the end, but his intrigues and adventures made Punjab a hot-bed of endless strife. Again and again he descended from his hill retreat, now looting Jalandhar and now invading Lahore, harrying the open country and carrying the peaceful inhabitants away as prisoners. He continued in this manner till Bahlol Lodhi ascended the throne. In 1429 CE, the Turkbacha leader of Sirhind invited Sheikh Ali, the governor of Kabul, to invade the Punjab. Malik Sikandar, the governor of Lahore, gave Sheikh Ali two thousand rupees annually to keep him off. This policy, however, did not succeed for long. Sheikh Ali conquered Lahore, and made a large number of men and women of the town his prisoners. He continued his depredations in the districts of Lahore and Dipalpur to such an extent that 40,000 inhabitants were said to have been massacred, besides a large number carried away as prisoners.[19]

Babar's invasion proved to be a scourge on Punjab. The flaming sword of the ambitious Mughal spared no man, woman or child. Babar's memoirs record, "...advanced to Sialkot, the inhabitants of which submitted and saved their possessions, but the inhabitants of Sayyedpur, who resisted, were put to sword, their wives and children taken into captivity and all their property plundered."[20] In *Babarvani,* Sri Guru Nanak Dev depicts a touching scene of people's suffering under the invader's gun and gong.

As Daulat Khan Lodhi had invited Babar to invade India, Ibrahim Lodhi, the Delhi emperor, suspecting the loyalty of Daulat Khan, expelled him from Lahore. He

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was compelled to take refuge among the Balauchis. After destroying town after town that resisted, Babar reached the outskirts of Lahore. After a fierce and bloody battle Babar won the field. At Dipalpur, Babar was joined by Daulat Khan Lodhi and his three sons. Daulat Khan, however, subsequently deserted the cause of Babar and fled to the hills with his family. This disheartened Babar who left India after appointing Abdul Aziz as governor of Lahore.[21]

Again in 1526 CE, Punjab witnessed the armed conflict for supremacy over northern India. Babar's use of gunpowder, his superior tactics and devoted soldiery brought him victory over Ibrahim Lodhi in the famous battle of Panipat. Babar, thus, successfully founded the Mughal Empire in India. Punjab was of great strategic importance as the gateway to the subcontinent, and it also supplied the best soldiers to the Delhi rulers. By ceding Punjab to his brother Kamran, Humayun, Babar's son and successor, committed a blunder of great magnitude. According to Professor Rushbrook Williams, the transfer of Punjab to his brother "cut the taproot of Humayun's military power." This also accounted for Humayun's loss of power at the hands of Sher Shah Suri.[22]

In 1555 CE, Punjab was again witness to turmoil as there occurred a political upheaval that resulted in Humayun's return to power. Humayun, with a large Mughal army, had occupied Kabul. He sent Bairam Khan at the head of a considerable army towards Lahore. Bairam crossed the Indus and defeated Tatar Khan, the Afghan envoy of Lahore, and Humayun entered Lahore unopposed. Another decisive battle was fought at Sirhind. Having been defeated at Machhiwara, the Afghans under Sikandar Shah Sur and Tatar Khan advanced to offer battle. The Mughal army met the advancing columns, and a fierce encounter took place, in which the Afghans were defeated and suffered heavy losses. Sikandar Shah Sur fled to the Shivalik hills, leaving the whole country in the hands of the invader. Humayun occupied Delhi and Agra without any opposition.[23]

During the reign of the Lodhis, religious intolerance was conspicuous. Sikandar Lodhi was firmly attached to Islam, and his fanatic zeal found its expression in the destruction of Hindu temples. The author of *Tarikh-i-Daudi* writes, "Sikandar was so zealous a Mussalman that he utterly destroyed diverse places of worship of the infidels, and left not a vestige of them." He further states that "on the occasion when a crowd of Hindus had assembled in large numbers at Kurukshetra, Sikandar wished to go to Thanesar for the purpose of putting them all to death."[24]

In the absence of a just and fair administration, people suffered every kind of privation and shame. In his inimitable terse and epigrammatic way, Sri Guru Nanak Dev sums up : "The present age is a knife, kings are butchers and justice has taken wings and fled."[25]

It was indeed an age of moral decadence. Depravity of the ruling class, their indifference towards the people, their dislike of the Hindu religion, their inability to bring about social harmony and peace created an atmosphere of total chaos. People, steeped in poverty and ignorance, subjected by the selfish and avaricious Hindu priestly

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class to supernatural fears, were floundering in the deepest depths of despair. Religious intolerance led the rulers to the repression of the idol worshippers. The poll tax, the pilgrim tax, public degradation in dress and demeanour, suppression of religious fairs and processions, prohibition to construct new temples or renovate old ones, and systematic repression of Hindu political leaders added to their woes. The Hindu psyche was indeed in the nadir of despair.[26]

Bhai Gurdas, while depicting the age of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, dwells at length to describe that in that age the people had forgotten all real values of religion and were going after empty ritualism. As he says :

> Forgetting that truth was One, the *sanyasis* of various denominations, Jogis, Jangams, Digambars and the like, the representatives of six different schools of thought, the four castes with four *ashrams*, the Brahmins with their *Puranas* and *Vedas* which they did not understand, all followed their own separate paths, belief in incantations naturally became widespread and ignorance reigned supreme. The Muslims occupied themselves with pulling down temples and building mosques in their stead. They had their fast, their *Id* and their *namaz*. *Pirs*, *paigambars*, *aulias* and others, each followed his own path, but all ended in egotism and pride. Cows were slaughtered. People came to be grouped as the infidels, the faithless, the Armenians, the Rumis and the like which resulted in eternal strife. The world was full of sin.[27]

Besides, there existed no bond between Hindus and Muslims. In the words of Latif, "Great jealousy and hatred existed in those times between Hindus and Mohammedans."[28] Among themselves too, the Hindus were far from being united or at peace. Apart from the political rivalry of those who had managed to retain power and position at the expense of honour and independence, there existed the accursed system of caste, that divided the people into mutually hostile groups, and condemned the lower rung of the community to a wretched and despicable condition. The majority of the lower castes found conversion to Islam far more rewarding, for Islam recognised no caste distinction and offered opportunities of growth and economic independence to the downtrodden sections of society. The new converts to Islam often turned out to be fiercer bigots and more fiery fanatics than the earlier Muslims. Even the Hindus in the employ of the Muslim regime were far more ruthless than their Muslim counterparts to suck the blood of the poor people of the state.

The priests, who were custodians and dispensers of religion and religious knowledge, had become base and corrupt and reduced religion to a mockery — forms and symbols lacking real life and spirit. There was a deplorable degradation all around. The masses wallowed in vice, ignorance, superstition and tyranny, and oppression benumbed their spirit and desire for freedom. The wave of proselytization unsettled popular beliefs of the Hindus. The *mullahs* and Mohammedan divines were as devoid of spirituality as the Hindu priests.[29]

Male chauvinism, patriarchal family system, loose morals of the invading Sakas, Pathans, and Mughals gave a further setback to the status of women in society. The carrying away of beautiful Hindu women by the Muslim rulers and forcing them into

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marriages became the order of the day. Harems of affluent Muslim lords were full of women of every caste and creed. Concubinage and wine became the major sources of entertainment in these palatial mansions. To escape the opprobrium of the rulers and to save their honour, the Hindus encouraged female infanticide and *sati*. In every household it was the man who called the shots; all others were subservient to him. Consequently, woman lost her individuality and became a mere sex object in the hands of man. Sri Guru Nanak Dev touches upon this evil when he says, "Women have turned men's counsellors; men have taken to preying on others. Fled are good conduct, restraint and purity; people's diet is what is forbidden."[30]

The system of *sati* was very common and widows were usually forcibly burned on the pyre of their husbands, as Sri Guru Amar Das, the third Guru, writes : "Women are burnt in the fire with their (deceased) husbands."[31]

— *K.S.*

II. State Policy Towards Hindus During the Sultanate Period

Some modern historians opine that the Sultanate had no legal sanction in the *Shariat*, that the sultan never behaved like a fanatic bigot and that he handled the state affairs only in the light of expediency. He had to enter into a series of compromises without any partiality or religious prejudice.[32] These scholars are also of the view that during the reign of the early Turkish sultans, the non-Muslims enjoyed full religious freedom.[33] But on the other hand, instances of religious bigotry and intolerance on the part of the ruling class are quite numerous. During the Arab hegemony over Sindh, the Hindus had been accorded the status of *zimmis*, who for their security and religious freedom were obliged to pay a tax called *jaziya*,[34] which signified religious prejudice and discrimination. While imposing *jaziya* on the Hindus in general, Muhammad-bin-Qasim exempted the Brahmins and Hindu ascetics from its incidence.[35] The sultans continued to treat the Hindus as *zimmis*,[36] realising *jaziya* as prescribed in the *Shariat*.[37] However, the Brahmins continued to be a privileged class even under the Muslim rule, for they were exempted from *jaziya*. He (Muhammad-bin-Qasim) had to face considerable protests from Hindus, and consequently he agreed to realise *jaziya* at a reduced rate.[38] Many a time Muslim divines exhorted the sultans to force Hindus to embrace Islam or threaten them with death.[39] The sultans, however, did not resort to coercion, for they were aware of the numerical superiority of the non-Muslims and the chaos which could result from such actions.

The *Shariat* did not permit un-Islamic customs in a Muslim state. For the sake of political expediency, however, the Muslim rulers had allowed the Hindus to visit their centres of pilgrimage on the condition that they paid poll tax.[40] The poll tax seems to have been a sort of compromise between the strict injunctions of the *Shariat* to prohibit public celebration of un-Islamic practices and the desire of the vast Hindu population to perform their religious rites.[41] Besides, the Muslim rulers had no inhibitions in appropriating temple money. In fact, offerings of the Sun Temple at Multan formed a large part of the revenue of the ruler of Multan.[42] It can safely be surmised that

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political expediency, coupled with the financial exigency, compelled the iconoclasts to compromise their religious ideals.

As Muslim rulers championed the cause of Islam and took keen interest in its propagation, they did not hesitate to resort to violent means against non-Muslims. The Muslim rulers did not think of themselves as mere military adventurists who, with a flaming sword in hand, rode over dusty plains and hostile terrains to satisfy their lust for girls and gold. They thought they were *mujahids* whose avowed aim was to spread the gospel of their prophet Mohammed, and that too with a zeal unknown amongst any other people on this globe. Of course, there had been Christian crusaders, but they were not as ruthless as the Muslims. Sultan Firoz Tughlaq burnt alive a Brahmin because he had been publicly performing idol worship and attempted to persuade Hindus as well as Muslims to follow the practice.[43] The Hindu soldiers, women and children, who were taken as prisoners of war, were forcibly converted to Islam or kept as slaves by the Muslim rulers.[44] For proselytization, the Muslim rulers also took recourse to pecuniary allurements. Economic pressure was also brought on the people to swell the ranks of Muslims. Exemption from *jaziya* and the poll tax was another temptation to embrace Islam.[45] In taxation, too, the custom duty was charged at double the rates from the Hindu traders compared to the Muslims.[46] The common Hindus were not allowed to dress up like Muslims. Sometimes they were ordered to wear a distinct mark on their dresses, so that they might not be mistaken for Muslims.[47] The Muslim rulers forbade the common Hindus to ride on good horses, to carry arms, to wear fine clothes or to enjoy any of the luxuries of life.[48] The underlying motive of the Muslim rulers was that the common Hindus should not flaunt their wealth, instead they should keep a low profile.[49] Ferishta testifies that Sikandar Lodhi forced the infidels to read and write the Persian script, which was not customary among them.[50] In the changed religio-political scenario, inclination towards the Muslim culture was not a stigma for sections of the Hindu society.

Some historians have cited instances which show that the socio-cultural contact between Muslims and Hindus was on the increase, and that a composite Indian culture was in the offing.[51] Though both the communities lived side by side, they largely continued to move in their own orbits. In fact, the political status of the Hindus was not such as to inspire love or goodwill towards their political masters. The social and religious differences were so acute and fundamental that they had created a great barrier between the two communities.[52] The segregation between the two was so sharp that out of hatred and by their social rules, Hindus had come to despise the Muslims as *malechhas*. Whatever reciprocal influence they had on each other was restricted to outward appearance (dress, eating habits, architecture, etc.), but the fundamental differences between the two relating to religious outlook on life remained unresolved, and there was "yet no sign that the twain shall ever meet."[53] The religious leaders of both communities, i.e., the *ulemas* and the Brahmins, had come to cultivate a spirit of mutual ill-will, distrust and envy, which in turn led to the communal rivalries and sectarian animosities prevailing in India at that time.

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To recapitulate, the establishment of the Sultanate brought about a vital transformation in the socio-religious and political life of India. The most significant was the displacement of the Hindu ruling class of the Khatris by the Turko-Afghan Muslim nobility, which monopolized the state power for quite a long time giving way only at the advent of the Mughals. While allegiance to the Caliphate seems to be quite in consonance with the concept of Muslim polity, the Sultanate and some of its religio-political institutions, which had come to be accepted by the Muslim theologians, had no legal sanction in the *Shariat*. With the establishment of the Sultanate, Hinduism, especially the priestly class of the Brahmins, had lost the advantage of state patronage to Islam, the *ulemas* and the Sufis. Whereas the Hindu rulers had run the state in accordance with *varna ashram dharam*, now it was the turn of the *Shariat* to dominate. The Muslim rulers were obliged to enforce it in all spheres of life. The *qazis*, being the guardians and exponents of the *Shariat*, took over from the Brahmins their duty as adjudicators. While the Hindu *dharam* had discriminated against the lower castes and foreigners amongst Indian populace, the *Shariat* denied equal rights to the non-Muslims. The non-Muslims, who were graded as *zimmis*, lost their religious freedom due to various restrictions imposed on them. The Muslim rulers inspired by religious zeal persecuted non-Muslims and destroyed their places of worship as well. On the other hand, they took keen interest in the propagation of Islam. While the low castes of Indian society unhesitatingly embraced Islam, enticement and coercion were used to convert rich and influential Hindus. The rulers championed the cause of their own faith by extending to it the state patronage. The emergence of magnificent mosques, tombs, *maqtabs* and *madrassas* bear ample testimony to their religious zeal. The expansion and popularity of Muslim culture came as a natural result of political change. Alhough the rulers did not function in complete consonance with the Muslim law, yet they were always eager to safeguard and promote the interests of their co-religionists. Consequently, the state policies and religio-political institutions were not altogether free from the influence of Islam.

— *B.S.*

III. Political Scenario

During the Sultanate period, the Punjab did not form a single administrative entity. It was divided into different units such as Multan, Dipalpur, Lahore, Jalandhar, Sirhind and Samana, each under a separate governor.[54] In spite of the administrative fragmentation, the Punjab had an identity, socially and culturally distinct from the regions surrounding it.[55] Towards the end of the Sayyed rule (1440s), the Afghan nobles had come to occupy a pre-eminent position in the Punjab, hence the replacement of their rule by the Lodhi Afghans was only the recognition of a *fait accompli*.[56] Obviously, Sri Guru Nanak Dev had been a witness to the rise and fall of the Lodhi Sultanate. However, it was the invasion of Babar, during the time of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, that proved a turning point in the political destiny of this great subcontinent. There are verses in Sri Guru Nanak Dev's *bani* that refer to this momentous shift of power from

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the Afghans to the Mughals. To comprehend the impact of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's concern for the victims on the chessboard of politics, it would be pertinent to have a glimpse of those gory days that saw the fall of an empire and paved the way for the Mughal hegemony over this land.

Some modern historians refer to the Punjab of those times as a place of comparative peace and prosperity. W.H. McLeod says, "It seems Sri Guru Nanak Dev was born into a favoured period, at least as far as security and economic conditions were concerned."[57] In J.S. Grewal's view, the western dominions of the Lodhi sultans enjoyed comparative peace for nearly half a century after Sri Guru Nanak Dev's birth, and even during these fifty years "the internal peace does not appear to have been seriously disturbed."[58] On the other hand, Indu Bhushan Banerjee, who wrote on the early history of the Sikhs thirty years before W.H. McLeod and J.S. Grewal, has characterised the age of Sri Guru Nanak Dev as "an age of disintegration and an age of almost constant strife."[59] Significantly, Sri Guru Nanak Dev himself has clearly commented upon the then prevailing political chaos and administrative anarchy in Punjab. To place Sri Guru Nanak Dev's mission in proper perspective, it, therefore, becomes essential to evaluate the political scenario of the Punjab in the mid-fifteenth century.

The Lodhi sultans and their administrators do not seem to have paid proper attention to the political affairs of the Punjab during the first decade of the 16th century. Sikander Lodhi is known to have remained heavily engrossed in the affairs of Gwalior, which had an adverse impact on the political situation in Punjab. Daulat Khan Lodhi, who had been appointed governor of Lahore in 1500 CE, had virtually declared himself the *de facto* ruler of his dominions that extended from Sirhind in the east to Bhira in the west. Sultan Ibrahim Khan Lodhi, in his endeavour to impose strict courtly discipline, annoyed most of the Afghan nobles, who turned hostile towards him. They outwardly showed their allegiance to the Delhi sultan, but they were looking for an appropriate opportunity to throw away his authority.

In Central Asia and Trans-Oxiana, the Mughals, Uzbeks and Iranians were vying with each other to establish their hegemony. Babar, who ascended the throne of Farghana in 1494 CE, had experienced various ups and downs during his military career. There were times when he had no territory to rule, no home for refuge and only a handful of soldiers at his command.[60] It was in 1504 CE that he gained control over Kabul that proved a turning point in his career as well as in the history of the Indian subcontinent. He crossed the Khyber Pass in 1505 CE and captured Kohat, Bangash and Bannu. He advanced as far as Multan and after ravaging the country, returned to Kabul.[61]

Babar's plan to invade Hindustan in 1507 CE had to be abandoned, for he was busy in suppressing the Afghans of Lamghan.[62] Significantly, in the same year, he is known to have renounced the title of *Mirza* in order to assume the title of *Patshah*,[63] which suggests that he had firmly established himself on the throne of Kabul. Babar had a great fascination for Samarqand, the ancestral throne of Timur. He took its

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possession in 1497 CE and again in 1502 CE, but had to vacate it on both occasions. He again conquered it in 1512 CE, but to lose it once more in ignominy.[64] Consequently, he abandoned all hope of reoccupying it and instead planned to invade Hindustan. Talking about his plans regarding Hindustan, he writes, "Ever since I had occupied Kabul it had been my intention to move on Hindustan, but a variety of reasons had hitherto prevented me from carrying out my plans."[65] It was in early 1519 CE that he again marched on Hindustan to occupy Bajour, Bhira and Khushab. Significantly, he looked upon these territories as his ancestral property. He writes, "As it was always in my heart to possess Hindustan and as these several countries had once been held by the Turks, I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them into my hands, whether peacefully or by force."[66] Accordingly, he conducted his military campaign with utmost restraint and ordered his Mughal soldiers "not to hurt or harm the flock and herds of these people."[67] He even went to the extent of punishing those soldiers who had plundered and indulged in atrocities on the people.[68] During this campaign, he publically claimed his hereditary right to Indian territories, because "from the time of Timur these several countries, viz., Bhira, Khushab, Chenab and Chiniot had been held by his descendants and the dependents and adherents of these descendants."[69] As a sequel to this step, he despatched his emissary, Mullah Murshid, to Sultan Ibrahim Khan Lodhi claiming that "the countries which from old had belonged to the Turks, should be given up to me."[70] Mullah Murshid, on his way to Delhi, met Daulat Khan Lodhi, the Governor of Punjab, and despite five months' stay at Lahore, returned to Kabul without receiving any response from the sultan or his officials.[71]

Though sources available provide no definite date of Babar's third invasion, yet historians have come to the conclusion that it was made in 1520 CE. This time, Babar first recovered Bhira and the adjoining territories from where his men had been driven out after his return to Kabul. Then crossing the Chenab he proceeded to Sialkot, which was taken without much resistance.[72] But the people of Sayyedpur put up a stiff resistance, and had to be subdued by force. It is said "the garrison was put to the sword and their families carried into captivity."[73] Meanwhile, Babar received information of Shah Beg Arghun's strife in Kandahar, and immediately rushed back to Kabul. He remained busy for two years probably in regaining control of Kandahar, which he ultimately got in 1522 CE.[74]

Until then Babar had conducted three aggressive campaigns deep into Punjab. Unfortunately, Sultan Ibrahim Khan Lodhi and none of his top ranking nobles took care to protect the kingdom and its people from foreign invaders. Ironically, people were left to their own fate, and the Afghan rulers failed to anticipate and make preparation for the eventuality of the Mughal invasions. On the contrary, an atmosphere of factional feuds, distrust, treachery and treason was rife at the Lodhi court. Alam Khan Lodhi (also known as Ala-ud-Din Lodhi), an uncle of emperor Ibrahim Khan Lodhi, was aspiring to ascend the throne, and in his endeavour to achieve his aim, he sought Babar's assistance.[75] Similarly, Daulat Khan Lodhi, the governor of Punjab, whose relations with the sultan were far from cordial, cherished the ambition to be the master of the

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Punjab. He, too, sent an invitation to Babar to invade Hindustan.[76] Babar happily accepted the invitation and marched on Hindustan in the beginning of 1524 CE to exploit the situation in his favour. Meanwhile, Sultan Ibrahim Khan Lodhi, having learnt of Daulat Khan's rebellious designs, despatched an army under Behar Khan to chastise him and divest him of the governorship of Lahore.[77] On his part, Daulat Khan, instead of giving a fight, vacated Lahore to retire towards Multan. But in the meantime, Babar had already crossed the Indus and reached near Lahore without any resistance. Unfortunately, the Afghan army, which had been sent with the limited purpose to subdue Daulat Khan had to fight the Mughals to check their advance towards Lahore. In the ensuing battle in early 1524 CE, Babar having defeated the Afghan army, captured the city and set on fire some of the bazaars of Lahore.[78] Next, Babar marched on Dipalpur, stormed and plundered it, and put the garrison to the sword.[79]

Having annexed the Punjab up to the Satluj, Babar made arrangements to keep it in his possession. Daulat Khan Lodhi, who had joined Babar at Dipalpur, was offered only Jalandhar Doab. Obviously, he felt disappointed and subsequently along with his son, Ghazi Khan, retired to the Shivalik hills.[80] Dilawar Khan, another son of Daulat Khan, who had stayed back to submit, was rewarded with Sultanpur.[81] Mir Abdul Aziz was appointed the governor of Lahore, whereas Alam Khan Kushka was put in charge of Dipalpur. Similarly, Khusrau Kokaltash and Muhammad Ali Tazik were ordered to take charge of Sialkot and Kalanaur, respectively.[82] It is significant to note that to establish himself firmly in the Punjab, Babar had stationed garrisons of Mughal troops at all major and strategically important places. Immediately, after the departure of Babar from Punjab, Daulat Khan seized Sultanpur to proceed to Dipalpur. He made a quick and serious attempt to reoccupy whole of the Punjab, but in the meanwhile Ibrahim Khan Lodhi despatched an army to clear Punjab of the rebels as well as the invaders. Daulat Khan was not only successful to win over a section of the army, but he also drove away the Mughal troops as well as Alam Khan from Dipalpur. Alam Khan fled to Kabul and entered into an alliance with Babar to support him on the condition that he would leave the entire province of Punjab to the Mughals.[83] Accordingly, Alam Khan came back with a *furman* of Babar to Mughal commanders in the Punjab to assist him to capture Delhi. Babar desired to follow without delay. However, exigency of Uzbek uprisings had prevented him from proceeding immediately.[84]

On Alam Khan's return to Punjab, Daulat Khan acknowledged him his sovereign, and in connivance with other Afghan nobles, induced him to throw away his alliance with the Mughals. He also offered his army to assist Alam Khan in capturing the throne of Delhi.[85] Contrary to the advice of Mughal commanders, Alam Khan hastened to form a confederacy of the Afghan chiefs in the Punjab. It was agreed that Daulat Khan and his son Ghazi Khan were to remain in charge of the Punjab, while Alam Khan, assisted by Dilawar Khan and Hajji Khan (two other sons of Daulat Khan), were to lead an army to attack Delhi.[86] Consequently, Alam Khan, leading the army, laid siege on Delhi, but it proved a total disaster.[87] Meanwhile, Daulat Khan and Ghazi

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Khan gathered their men to check Babar's advance. To express his defiance to Babar, Daulat Khan girded two swords signifying his resolve to meet the Mughals in the battlefield.[88] Though confederacy of the Afghans of Punjab had failed to seize Delhi, Ghazi Khan was successful in occupying Kalanaur.[89] Similarly, he attempted to take Lahore and Sialkot, but the Mughal commanders, despite their limitations, were able to retain their positions at Lahore, and thus thwarted his attempt to capture the city.[90] Babar sent urgent instructions to his garrisons in Punjab, especially at Lahore, not to engage themselves in action against Daulat Khan and his son, but to meet them either at Sialkot or Pasrur.[91] Babar rapidly marched from Kabul to Sialkot and swooped upon the turbulent and war-like Jat and Gujjar tribes of the area, for they had plundered and harassed the Mughal troops on their way from Sialkot to Lahore.[92] It was at Sialkot that Babar learnt of the disastrous end of Alam Khan's campaign to Delhi.[93]

Although Daulat Khan and Ghazi Khan had a sizeable army at their command, and even at Lahore they were entrenched to engage the Mughals, yet they got panicky, abandoned Lahore and retreated to the fort of Milwat (Mallot).[94] Babar reoccupied the Punjab without any resistance from Daulat Khan and Sultan Ibrahim Khan Lodhi. To get rid of Daulat Khan for ever and to consolidate his position further, he hotly pursued him, besieged him in the fort of Mallot, and forced him to surrender in disgrace.[95] Having occupied Punjab and cleared it of all the refractory elements, Babar now advanced towards Delhi to set his camp at Panipat. On the other side, Sultan Ibrahim Khan collected a huge army and proceeded towards Panipat to oppose Babar, but only to lose his life and kingdom in April of 1526 CE, in the decisive battle at Panipat. After Panipat, Babar continued his triumphant march deep into central India. Though at one stage his nobles and soldiers were reluctant to continue fighting, yet, being a shrewd judge of human character, he motivated his reluctant soldiers and infused them with religious fervour to fight the infidels.[96] After Panipat, Babar gave some attention to the cis-Satluj area of the Punjab by assigning Khwaja Kalan and Khusrou Kokaltash to Ghuram and Samana, respectively.[97] Otherwise, we do not come across any reference suggesting any plan to replace the Mughal nobles in the Punjab whom he had already appointed in 1524 CE. To accomplish his victory, he compelled many a Turko-Afghan chieftains of Central India to submit and accept his suzerainty.

It has often been suggested that after Panipat, Babar could not pay his full attention to the affairs of the Punjab. Actually, after Panipat the theatre of warfare and political activities had shifted to western and later to eastern India. Moreover, major events such as the battles of Panipat and Chausa had been overshadowing the perceptions of the contemporary writers as well as of the modern historians, and they have not bothered to attend to the intervening period of Punjab politics. Hence, we have very little knowledge of what actually happened in the Punjab. J.S. Grewal argues, on the basis of his analysis of the phenomena of rehabilitation, resettlement and urbanization in the Punjab province under the Lodhis, that there were "long spells of peace punctuated by spasmodic warfare in Punjab during the lifetime of Sri Guru Nanak Dev."[98] To advance his argument, he states, "After the battle of Panipat, the Punjab remained

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virtually free from warfare and internal disorder."[99] A close perusal of the events relating to acts of sedition, royal dissensions and marching of royal armies to and from Lahore, however, provides enough data to give an alternative interpretation that political instability, anarchy and internal disorder were equally notable features of the Punjab politics in the early 16th century.

The Mughals, no doubt, had established their supremacy over the Afghans, but their position still appeared to have been largely of an occupation army. They had occupied the Punjab by sheer military might. No administrative system of the Mughals had yet come into force. So, to think of the Punjab situation in terms of peace and internal order does not seem plausible. During his invasion of 1524 CE, Babar had annexed almost the whole of the Punjab up to Satluj to appoint his men to garrison the province. It is evident from the memoirs of Babar that Mir Abdul Aziz, whom he had appointed governor at Lahore, remained in charge even after the battle of Panipat.[100] It was only in July 1529 CE that he flouted the royal orders and proved to be a refractory.[101] To curb his rebellion, Qamar Ali Arghun was ordered to march to Lahore to arrest Mir Abdul Aziz and his associates, and bring them all to the court.[102] Interestingly, Ahmad Yadgar has given an account of the journey made by Babar to Lahore in March 1529 CE, probably to set the affairs of Lahore in order, which had suffered due to the unruly attitude of Mir Abdul Aziz and his associates. It is said that when Babar was marching to Lahore, "at Sirhind he was met by the Raja of Kahlur, who presented him seven falcons and three maunds of gold and was confirmed in the *zamindari* of that place."[103] Though best of the sources testify that Babar's son, Mirza Kamran, was posted at Kabul, yet Ahmad Yadgar informs us that he was at Lahore.[104]

Significantly, some contradictory and confusing remarks have crept into the writings of modern historians. For instance, Bakshish Singh Nijjar holds that Mir Qasim Ali, who was appointed to the governorship of Lahore in 1527 CE, played a stellar role during the formative period of Mughal suzerainty by keeping the Punjab under complete control.[105] But it is quite evident from the memoirs of Babar that Mir Abdul Aziz was still in Lahore up to March 1529 CE.[106] Similarly, J.S. Grewal opines that in 1529 CE, Babar probably replaced Mir Abdul Aziz and appointed Mir Yunis Ali as the governor of Punjab. At the same time he also says, "It appears that in Babar's lifetime the Punjab had come to form Kamran's *jagir*."[107] Moreover, if Kamran was already in control of Punjab then his move to forcibly occupy the Punjab in 1530 CE appears to be quite to the contrary. It looks plausible that after appointing Mir Yunis Ali to the governorship of the Punjab, Babar had left Lahore for Agra in March 1530 CE.[108] On his return journey, at Sirhind, on the complaint of *qazi* of Samana, he sent a punitive expedition against Mohan Mundahir, a Rajput chief of Kaithal *pargana*.[109]

Emperor Humayun ascended the throne in December 1530 CE and remained engaged in fighting his political rivals. During his rule, the political condition had started deteriorating, and chaos prevailed all over the country. Punjab was no exception. Mirza Kamran, who was in possession of Kabul and Kandahar, cherished ambitions of being a sovereign. When he heard of Babar's death, he immediately gathered an

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army and marched towards Hindustan. Though Humayun, out of political compulsion or brotherly affection, showed signs of rapprochement, yet Kamran swiftly overran the greater part of the west Punjab. As he laid siege on Lahore, Mir Yunis Ali was not prepared to betray his loyalty to Humayun.[110] However, Mirza Kamran cleverly managed to get entry into Lahore without any resistance. Thereafter, in a swift move he occupied the whole of Punjab up to Satluj and appointed his own men to the *parganas* and *sarkars* of the province.[111] Humayun, ignorant of the strategic and military importance of the Punjab and the areas to its west, issued a *furman* to give these to Kamran in addition to the provinces already in his possession.[112] It enhanced his prestige and power virtually to that of an emperor. Henceforth, there was no interference by Humayun in the affairs of the Punjab, and Kamran virtually ruled the Punjab as a sovereign. Lahore became a centre of his authority from where he conducted his military campaigns to other areas.

In January 1536 CE, Mirza Sam marched on Kandahar to pose a serious threat to its security. Mirza Kamran, collecting an army, marched from Lahore to chase away the aggressor from his western domains.[113] During his absence from Lahore, Mirza Muhammed Zaman, a close relative of Humayun, who had fallen out with him and had taken shelter in Gujarat, marching through Sindh, entered into the Punjab. Though he laid siege on Lahore, he could not press it further, because in the meantime Mirza Kamran had returned victorious from Kandahar.[114] During the governorship of Mirza Kamran in 1537 CE, Kandahar once again came under the attack of the Iranians. For want of provisions and war-material, the Mughal commander, Khwaja Kilan Beg, was unable to defend the place. Thus, he abandoned his position and retired by way of Sindh to Lahore.[115] On the information of Mirza Haider Dughlat, in charge of Lahore, Mirza Kamran again set out at the head of an army for Kandahar. He was successful in forcing the Iranians to surrender the fort on the condition of a safe passage.[116] After putting the place in order, he marched back triumphantly to Lahore.[117] It appears that for over a year Mirza Kamran remained engaged at Kandahar, and in his absence Mirza Haider Dughlat dutifully looked after the administrative affairs like, "collecting taxes, suppressing revolts, protecting the frontiers and establishing Islam."[118] Though information about Mirza Haider Dughlat's efforts to maintain internal peace and to repel the external foes is not available, yet he himself informs that while acting as deputy of Mirza Kamran at Lahore, he was approached by some Kashmiri chiefs who had fallen out with their ruler and had come to procure military assistance from the Mughals, to invade Kashmir in order to overthrow the ruler. In due course he was able to organize a force and appointed Baba Chuchak, a prominent Mughal noble of Kamran, to accompany the Kashmiri chiefs to restore them their possessions. However, Baba Chuchak on some pretext chose not to execute the orders. Thus, the expedition proved a failure.[119]

Humayun's preoccupation in western India to subdue Gujarat and Malwa, coupled with his indifferent attitude towards the affairs of the east, provided ample opportunities to Sher Shah Suri to consolidate his power in Bihar. By 1538 CE, he, quietly and

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assiduously, had become so powerful that he had no scruples to proclaim himself the king of Bihar.[120] Alarmed at his increasing influence, Humayun initiated a campaign against him and though it started well, it failed to achieve its aim. While Humayun was in the thick of crisis and was planning his way out of the imbroglio, his brothers, instead of coming to his rescue, were hatching conspiracies against him. Mirza Hindal had abandoned his position in Bengal and incited by some discontented nobles, set out for Delhi to raise the standard of revolt. In spite of Sheikh Behlul's mission to persuade him not to throw away his allegiance to Humayun, he went on to besiege Delhi.[121] Meanwhile, some Mughal nobles, who were facing hardships due to the siege, sent messengers requesting Mirza Kamran at Lahore to come to their rescue.[122] However, the hopeless state of affairs in the east and Mirza Hindal's open designs to occupy Delhi had already prompted Kamran to march from Lahore at the head of an army.[123] He had hardly reached Sonipat when Mirza Hindal abandoned the siege and hastily retreated towards Agra. Instead of storming Delhi, Mirza Kamran proceeded to Agra, where he found himself at the helm of state affairs. Here, with the help of the Mughal nobles, he organised an army in order to march against Sher Shah Suri. His advisors, however, prevailed upon him that to reinforce Humayun could prove detrimental to his interests.[124] Consequently, after a couple of expeditions beyond Agra, he came back to the capital.

Before the rainy season of 1539 CE, for two months both the Mughal and Afghan armies were camping near Chausa on the opposite banks of the Ganges. Humayun, compelled by circumstances, made overtures for a negotiated settlement. Sher Shah Suri initially responded crudely to Mullah Muhammad Barghiz, the Mughal envoy. Later on he agreed to send Sheikh Khalil, an eminent Sufi saint, descending from the famous Sheikh Farid of Pakpattan, to carry on negotiations with the emperor.[125] While the peace parleys had not resulted in any definite settlement, Humayun became circumspect and was constantly on his guard. On June 27, 1539 CE, Sher Shah Suri, taking advantage of the negligence of the Mughal army, swooped on the Mughals. Taken unawares, the Mughals were thrown into disarray and were completely routed. Humayun, with the help of a water-carrier, saved himself by swimming across the river.

While Sher Shah Suri was quick to occupy the country to the east of the Ganges as far as Kanauj, the House of Babar at Agra lay totally divided regarding measures to be taken against the Afghans. For six or seven months they daily held prolonged discussions, but due to mutual distrust they failed to overcome their internal dissensions.[126] Though Mirza Kamran offered to lead the Mughal army against Sher Shah Suri, yet Humayun was not inclined to entrust the campaign to him. Hereafter, Mirza Kamran started persisting in his petitions to be allowed to depart for Lahore. He refused even to lend his army to Humayun; and putting excuses of bad health, desired to go back. As a prelude to his departure, he sent Mirza Kilan Beg with a large force to move in advance to Lahore. Mirza Haider Dughlat, who earnestly advised the Mughal brothers to sort out their differences, laments that "the departure of Kamran was the turning point in the rise of Sher Shah and downfall of Chughtai power."[127] Very truly

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he became "an author and architect of destruction and detriment."[128]

A close perusal of the events from the beginning of the 16th century to the establishment of Afghan rule under Sher Shah Suri reveals that during this period there was a perpetual struggle for supremacy. The Afghan nobles had come to occupy an important position and gradually Daulat Khan Lodhi had emerged as one of the most powerful Afghan nobles of Punjab. Due to the Lodhi sultan's negligence towards the affairs of Punjab, coupled with political manoeuvring, Daulat Khan had made himself a formidable force. Though Babar was seriously thinking of marching on Hindustan, it was only after his ineffective campaigns to expand his empire towards Khurasan that he took the decision to invade Delhi. Firstly, he tried to annex the Punjab on the pretext that it had been in the possession of Timur's descendants and that he had a right to it. Initially, he conducted his campaign with utmost restraint avoiding bloodshed, but wherever people offered resistance he crushed them ruthlessly. He plundered the villages *en route* to replenish his stocks of cereals and materials required for warfare in India.

It appears that Babar was prepared to come to an understanding with the Afghan nobles of Punjab. On occupying Bhira, he readily accepted gifts from Ali Khan, a son of Daulat Khan, who was in charge there as his father's deputy.[129] Perhaps Mullah Murshid's mission to Lahore was also aimed at persuading Daulat Khan Lodhi to enter into an alliance with the Mughals. As a prelude to his victory over Delhi, Babar annexed the whole of the Punjab and garrisoned all the major administrative centres with the Mughal soldiers. Finally, to remove all chances of resistance from an astute noble like Daulat Khan, he decided to get rid of him forever. Immediately after Panipat there seems to have been no discernible change in the administrative set-up, except that Babar entrusted Ghuram and Samana in cis-Satluj region to his two distinguished nobles. In 1529 CE, Babar marched to Lahore, probably to replace Mir Abdul Aziz, the governor of Lahore, who in connivance with some influential religious persons of Lahore, was proving to be refractory there.

To sum up, Humayun had hardly ascended the throne when Mirza Kamran, marching from Kabul, overran the whole of the Punjab to occupy it. Thereafter, till annexation by Sher Shah Suri, it remained in his possession. During Mirza Kamran's reign, the Punjab had been a centre of political and military activities. To fulfil his administrative obligations, he had twice raised an army (1536 CE and 1538 CE) to march out of Lahore to defend and to clear away the invaders from his western dominions. During 1536 CE, peace was again disturbed in Punjab due to the siege of Lahore by Mirza Muhammad Zaman. Again, in 1538 CE, while Mirza Muhammad Dughlat was incharge of Lahore as Mirza Kamran's deputy, on the request of some Kashmiri nobles, an army of Mughals was sent to overthrow the ruler of Kashmir. Finally in 1538 CE, having learnt of Mirza Hindal's rebellion and the precarious position of Humayun in the east, Mirza Kamran gathered a strong army at Lahore and marched via Delhi to Agra, probably to achieve his cherished ambition to ascend the imperial throne.

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IV. Reflection of the Age in Guru Nanak Bani

A close perusal of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's *bani* reveals that he had an intimate acquaintance with the political, social and religious conditions of his times.[130] There are several verses which refer to social and political life of the times. For example :

- *Kalyug* is turned knife, rulers butchers; Righteousness on wings is flown. This is the dark night of evil; The moon of truth is no where visible, nor risen.[131]
- Greed and evil are king and counsellor; falsehood their officer. Lust the officer who is called for advice — all three hold conclave to chalk out plans.[132]
- In *kalyug* has mankind turned dog-like, carrion its food. Falsehood it barks out; gone is righteous thinking. Those that in life had no faith, in death too foul is their repute.[133]
- Rulers are turned beasts of prey, their officers hounds; None do they allow in peace to rest. The subordinates wound the people with their claws : like dogs you lick on the blood and marrow of the poor.[134]

Obviously, these verses point to the general moral degeneration that tainted the ruling class of the times. His criticism is directed not against any specific community or creed but against all those who were steeped in the prevalent vices.[135] Although the top rung of the ruling class was predominantly Muslim, yet most of their lower level officials such as *chaudhris*, *rais* and *muqaddams* belonged predominantly to the erstwhile Hindu ruling class and continued to serve the Muslim administration.

The establishment of Muslim rule had brought about many changes in Punjabi society. Observing these, Sri Guru Nanak Dev remarked, "In the age of *kalyug*, the Ultimate Reality is now remembered by its Islamic name, *Allah*. The Turks and the Pathans are the rulers and the blue robes (the dress of professors of Islam) are considered respectable."[136] Here, Sri Guru Nanak Dev has characterised the contemporary rule with the *kalyug*, the era of degeneration. Secondly, though Islamic beliefs and practices prevailed, these too were not devoid of immoral and irreligious elements. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's response to Muslim rule is depicted in unmistakable terms in the following verse :

> Now the Primal Lord is called *Allah* and the turn of *sheikhs* has come. The practice to tax the gods and their temples has come into vogue. The language has become different because in every household father is now called *mian*.[137]

In the above verse, Sri Guru Nanak Dev has established a close connection between the ruling class and its faith. He affirms that as hailed by Muslims the Islamic name of God had come into vogue, for the state became theocratic in character. Obviously, the number of adherents of Islam in India had increased. The Muslims had come to occupy an important and honourable position in the society. Islamic mode of worship was encouraged by the ruling class. The *lingua franca* also underwent a transformation. Persian, the court language, was gaining currency, and those who learnt it regarded themselves superior to others and were patronised by the rulers. Similarly, food habits of the people were also changing under the influence of Islam. Hindus, desirous of partaking meat had to eat the meat of an animal slaughtered in

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accordance with the Muslim custom.[138] Evidently, Sri Guru Nanak Dev found a close relationship between the Muslim rule and the rapid expansion of Islamic culture in India. He did not approve of the discriminatory taxes imposed on the non-Muslim subjects and restrictions on their religious freedom.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev fearlessly condemns the unfair and unjust administration of the so-called pious *mullahs* and *qazis* :

> The chief trait of the age is that an oppressor instead of being repudiated, is welcomed everywhere... ... The persons committed to the essence of religion are frequently disgraced and if anyone points towards such evils, he is subjected to slander and publicly dishonoured. The subordinates instead of being faithful, hatch conspiracies to imprison and murder their masters... ... The administration of justice is based on *Shariat* but the character of *qazi*, who is responsible to dispense justice, is not unblemished.[139]

The *qazi*, the representative of *Shariat* in administration was the embodiment of impiety. Reacting to the patronage of Islam by the ruling class, Sri Guru Nanak Dev says, "*Kalyug* forces the acceptance of semitic books and the *Quran*. The *Puranas* and the Brahminical scriptures have become irrelevant. God's name has changed to *Rehman*."[140] It is said that the *ulemas* had degraded themselves to the position of petty job hunters.[141] Sri Guru Nanak Dev makes reference to a *qazi*, who in his efforts to overcome his destitution had converted his house into a mosque.[142] Obviously, in the garb of propagation of Islam, it was done to attract state patronage.

The *Shariat* exhorts a Muslim ruler to carry on *jehad* in *dar-ul-Harb* (i.e., country inhabited by *kafirs*) till it is converted into *dar-ul-Islam*. Consequently, to the Muslim rulers all non-Muslim subjects were *kafirs*.[143] Discrimination on the basis of faith and coercion to embrace Islam were not acceptable to Sri Guru Nanak Dev. He aptly observes that both the *kafir* and the Muslim strive in their own way to realise the One Reality. Those who differentiate between human beings, between the *kafir* and the Muslim, would themselves be put into the fire of hell.[144] On the basis of such verses we may conclude that while the Muslim rulers patronized Islam and took keen interest in its propagation, they also adopted a policy of religious intolerance towards the non-Muslims. For Sri Guru Nanak Dev to reconcile with such government was impossible, because he considered that discrimination on religious grounds was against *Hukam*. Sri Guru Nanak Dev desired coexistence and harmony in society. He was opposed to theocratic domination by and forcible conversion to any particular faith.

Social and economic exploitation of the hapless subjects is not only an ignominous blot on the face of mankind, but it has also been a social evil of the age. In medieval times, state officials used to exploit the poor subjects by extracting illegal taxes and forcing them to do various types of *begaar* (forced labour).[145] Alluding to the atrocious behaviour of the rulers towards their subjects, Sri Guru Nanak Dev describes them as 'man-eaters'.[146] Expressing his concern at violation of human rights by the ruling class, he declared, "For a Muslim to snatch others' rights is as sinful as eating pork, while for a Hindu it is like eating beef."[147] Islamic law prescribes utmost care for

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internal as well as external purity before a Muslim can go to prayers. A Muslim's prayer is invalidated if his dress is defiled by stains of blood or urine.[148] Sri Guru Nanak Dev holds that by this logic "prayers of sinful Muslim nobles who usurped the honest earnings of others could not be accepted at the Divine court."[149] We come across verses in which Sri Guru Nanak Dev has enjoined upon the Muslims to imbibe in them true Islamic values. Perhaps taking cognizance of the haughty attitude of the Muslim rulers, Sri Guru Nanak Dev advised them to earn their livelihood by rightful means, and to be humble and compassionate to all.[150]

The Muslim theologians served in various capacities in the task of establishing Muslim rule in India. The institution of *qazi* was entrusted with the administration of justice in accordance with the *Shariat*. In Muslim society, a *qazi* was held in high esteem, because apart from being an exponent of Islamic law, he was supposed to be a man of piety and integrity. Though religio-political conditions helped the *qazis* to acquire undue prominence and power, yet it has been observed that they had lost religious dignity and moral prestige.[151] Driven by sheer greed or sycophancy, they would often twist or misinterpret the *Shariat* to legitimize un-Islamic and unethical acts of the Muslim rulers.[152] Even the Muslim rulers themselves exploited the religious influence of Muslim theologians to promote their own ends. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's remarks about clergy of the time are quite telling, because they provide significant clues to their nefarious functioning. He says, "They tell falsehood which is no less than eating filth."[153] Here Sri Guru Nanak Dev has criticised the *qazi* along with the Brahmin and the yogi for misleading the people from the path of true religion. *Qazi's* participation and responsibility in contemporary administration have been specifically mentioned, "A *qazi's* character is not unblemished, as instead of dispensing justice in accordance with the *Shariat*, he has fanned rivalries and disputes."[154] He further says, "A *qazi* holds his court to dispense justice, and while giving the appearance of a religious person, he takes bribes to deprive the subjects of their rights, and if someone challenges his judgement, he justifies his actions by misquoting the *Shariat*."[155] Though the *qazis* were considered to be the custodians of the *Shariat*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev finds them bereft of Islamic virtues and, thus, unfit to occupy any responsible position in the administration. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's criticism of the *qazis* is very significant in that it questions the integrity of a class which was closely associated with the ruling Muslim class. Indirectly it questions the very legitimacy of the Muslim rulers provided by the corrupt *qazis*.

In Sri Guru Nanak Dev's experience "corruption is so rampant in the administration that there is no one who does not receive or give bribe. Even the *raja* does justice only when his palm is greased and none is moved in the name of *Khuda*."[156] In Sri Guru Nanak Dev's compositions we find *Khuda* as an epithet of God. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's reaction suggests that the persons holding responsible positions in the contemporary administration irrespective of their religion, were devoid of virtues.

The Muslim rulers had reserved some portion of land revenue for religious grants, commonly known as *madad-i-maash jagirs*, extending patronage to the *ulemas* and the

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masheikhs. They conferred upon them stipends and revenue-free land grants.[157] In due course, Sufi *pirs* and *sheikhs* got ascendancy over the *ulemas* and came to occupy the position of the 'Brahmins of Islam in India'.[158] In one of his verses, Sri Guru Nanak Dev makes reference to the Sufi *pirs* as spiritual preceptors going around conferring benedictions and authorising their successors to initiate others onto the Sufi path and their subsistence on the grants given by the Muslim rulers.[159] In his view, the preceptors of both religions, viz., Mullahs and Brahmins were dishonest and shameless. They claimed to accomplish the task of expansion of their respective religions. Sri Guru Nanak Dev found their claim to holiness as sheer cant and called them morally unfit to receive religious grants from the state. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's remarks about the Sufis are very significant in the sense that they refer to that degeneration of Sufism which was dominant amongst the then Muslim society.[160]

Another aspect of Muslim rule was its drastic destabilizing effect on the Hindu society, which ultimately led to its disintegration. In the changed political conditions, Hindus' inclination towards the Muslim culture was no more an enigma or a thing to be frowned upon. The Khatris of Punjab, who traced their lineage to the mythic warriors of the epic *Ramayana*, were among those who showed a considerable adaptability to the conditions of Muslim rule.[161] Taking cognizance of their hypocritical attitude towards the new religio-political setup, Sri Guru Nanak Dev remarks, "The Khatris abjuring their *dharam* of soldiering to defend the country, have started learning the language of the foreigners."[162] He was, thus, lamenting the self-professed 'brave Hindu Khatris' losing faith in their arms to protect their land and people, and instead acquiring knowledge of Persian, the official language of the Muslim rulers, in their keenness to gain employment in their administration.[163]

In *Babarvani*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev strongly condemns Babar for the wanton bloodshed, desecration and shame that came in the wake of his invasion. He was well aware that both the invaders as well as the defenders professed the same religion — Islam. In fact, he blamed the invaded Muslim rulers, the Lodhis, equally because he found them failing in their responsibility to protect their subjects from foreign aggression. What he most scorned was the cruelties perpetrated by the invading Mughals on the womenfolk. Further, Sri Guru Nanak Dev observes that the Afghans were inadequately equipped to defend, while Babar had come well-armed and with artillery. Instead of taking effective measures, the Afghans continued to depend on the efficacy of charms and spells. Since ancient times, the Hindu rulers had superstitious faith in the capability of *purohitas*. They even accompanied the army to the battlefield in the belief that a *purohita's* charms and spells would ensure the defeat of the enemy.[164] It seems a similar belief became prevalent among the Muslim rulers who relied on the Sufi *pirs*. Besides employing Hindu astrologers at their courts, most of the Muslim rulers invariably adopted a Sufi *sheikh* as their *murshid*.[165] The Lodhis, too, reposed great faith in the efficacy of Sufi *pirs* when confronting the enemy. But referring to their worthlessness in such a crisis, Sri Guru Nanak Dev remarked, "When they heard of Mir Babar's invasion, innumerable Sufi *pirs* tried to stop him by their

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magical spells. However, none of the Mughals was blinded nor any other of the spells had any effect."[166] Thus, Sri Guru Nanak Dev strongly felt that even though a ruler may profess any religion, it is his duty to provide security to his subjects.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev did not denounce the Muslim political institutions. He condemned the officials associated with these institutions for their unjust, immoral and tyrannical attitude towards the subjects. He took serious note of the shortcomings and malfunctioning of the contemporary Muslim administration and strongly condemned the presence of inefficient and corrupt officials in it.

— *B.S.*

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    ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ ॥
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53. Ibid., p. 617.
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62. Ibid., pp. 340-343; Abul Fazl states that Babar returned to Kabul owing to differences of opinion among his nobles, see H. Beveridge (trans.) : *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, reprint, Delhi, 1989, p. 235.
63. *Babar Nama*, p. 344.
64. Ibid., p. 356.
65. Ibid., p. 478.
66. Ibid., p. 380.
67. Ibid., p. 380.
68. Ibid., p. 383.
69. Ibid., p. 382.
70. Ibid., p. 385; Abul Fazl remarks that an emissary was sent only to congratulate Sultan Ibrahim Khan Lodhi, who had recently ascended the throne of Delhi, see, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 238.
71. *Babar Nama*, p. 385.
72. Ibid., p. 429.
73. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Vol. II, p. 23.
74. *Babar Nama*, p. 436.
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77. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Vol. II, p. 24.
78. Ibid., p. 24.
79. Ibid., p. 24.
80. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
81. *Babar Nama*, pp. 442-43.
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84. Ibid., p. 444.
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87. Erskine, William : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 427
88. *Babar Nama*, pp. 451-53.
89. Ibid., p. 452; *Tabaqat-i-Babari*, p. 25.
90. *Babar Nama*, p. 453.
91. Ibid., p. 454.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., p. 458; *Tabaqat-i-Babari*, p. 49, situated at the foot of Shivalik hills, the fort of Mallot was Daulat Khan's stronghold. It is about five miles from Hariana to the east in the Hoshiarpur

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district. See Nijjar, Bakhshish Singh : *Punjab Under the Mughals*, Bombay, 1968, p. 19.

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102. Ibid., p. 688.
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108. *Babar Nama*, p. 699.
109. Elliot & Dowson : op. cit., pp. 40-41.
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114. *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 308; Abdul Qadir Badaoni remarks that Mirza Muhammad Zaman had to lift the siege because Humayun had returned to Agra, see *Muntkhab-ut-Twarikh*, Vol. I, p. 456, (Eng. trans., Ranking, George S.A.).
115. Erskine, William : *A History of India Under Humayun*, Delhi, pp. 104-05.
116. Ibid., p. 106.
117. *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 309.
118. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 469.
119. Ibid, pp. 481-82.
120. Erskine, William : op. cit., p. 155.
121. *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, pp. 335-37.
122. Ibid., p. 339.
123. Elliot & Dowson : op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 202; Erskine, William : op. cit., pp. 168-69; Gulbadan Begum : *Humayun Nama*, Eng. trans. by Beveridge, A.S., London, 1902, p. 137,
124. *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 340.
125. Erskine, William : op. cit., pp. 168-69.
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Badaoni, Abdul Qadir : *Muntkhab-ut-Twarikh*, p. 460.
Elliot & Dowson : op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 203.
126. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 471; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 56.
127. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 472.
128. *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 247.
129. *Babar Nama*, p. 382.
130. McLeod, W.H. : op. cit., p. 162; Grewal, J.S. : op. cit., pp. 156.

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131. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Majh*, p. 145.
ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥
ਕੂੜੁ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹਿ ਚੜਿਆ ॥

132. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, pp. 468-69.
ਲਬੁ ਪਾਪੁ ਦੁਇ ਰਾਜਾ ਮਹਤਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੁ ॥
ਕਾਮੁ ਨੇਬੁ ਸਦਿ ਪੁਛੀਐ ਬਹਿ ਬਹਿ ਕਰੇ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

133. Ibid., *Raag Sarang*, pp. 1242-43.
ਕਲਿ ਹੋਈ ਕੁਤੇ ਮੁਹੀ ਖਾਜੁ ਹੋਆ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ॥
ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਬੋਲਿ ਭਉਕਣਾ ਚੂਕਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ... ... ॥
ਸੀਲੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਸੁਚ ਭੰਨੀ ਖਾਣਾ ਖਾਜੁ ਅਹਾਜੁ ॥
ਸਰਮੁ ਗਇਆ ਘਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਪਤਿ ਉਠਿ ਚਲੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥

134. Ibid., *Raag Mallar*, p. 1288.
ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥
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135. Nizami, K.A. : op. cit., p. 322.

136. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Asa*, p. 470.
ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਬੇਦੁ ਅਥਰਬਣੁ ਹੂਆ ਨਾਉ ਖੁਦਾਈ ਅਲਹੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
ਨੀਲ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਲੇ ਕਪੜੇ ਪਹਿਰੇ ਤੁਰਕ ਪਠਾਣੀ ਅਮਲੁ ਕੀਆ ॥

137. Ibid., *Raag Basant*, p. 1191.
ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਉ ਅਲਹੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੇਖਾਂ ਆਈ ਵਾਰੀ ॥
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ਕੂਜਾ ਬਾਂਗ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਨੀਲ ਰੂਪ ਬਨਵਾਰੀ ॥
ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮੀਆ ਸਭਨਾਂ ਜੀਆਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਅਵਰ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ॥੬॥

138. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 472.
ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਾਣਾ ॥

139. Ibid., *Raag Ramkali*, pp. 902-03.
ਹੋਵੈ ਪਰਵਾਣਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਧਿਙਾਣਾ ਕਲਿ ਲਖਣ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ ... ...
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਸਤੁ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਛੀਜੈ ਤਪ ਘਰਿ ਤਪੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ਲਏ ਬਦਨਾਵੀ ਕਲਿ ਕੇ ਲਖਣ ਏਈ ॥੩॥
ਜਿਸੁ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਖੁਆਰੀ ਚਾਕਰ ਕੇਹੇ ਡਰਣਾ ॥
ਜਾ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੈ ਪਵੈ ਜੰਜੀਰੀ ਤਾ ਚਾਕਰ ਹਥਹੁ ਮਰਣਾ ॥੪॥ ... ...
ਕਲਿ ਕਲਵਾਲੀ ਸਰਾ ਨਿਬੇੜੀ ਕਾਜੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਹੋਆ ॥

140. Ibid., *Raag Ramkali*, p. 903.
ਕਲਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਕਤੇਬ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥
ਪੋਥੀ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰਹੇ ਪੁਰਾਣ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਰਹਮਾਣੁ ॥

141. Ashraf, K.M. : *op. cit.*, p. 99.

142. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Sarang*, p. 1245.
ਭੁਖੇ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਘਰੇ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥

143. Ibid., *Raag Dhanasri*, p. 663.
ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਈ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ ॥

144. Ibid., *Raag Majh*, p. 142.
ਰਾਹ ਦੋਵੈ ਇਕੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਝਸੀ ॥
ਕੁਫਰ ਗੋਅ ਕੁਫਰਾਣੈ ਪਇਆ ਦਝਸੀ ॥
ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੁਬਹਾਨੁ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਈਐ ॥

145. Habib, Irfan : *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 247.

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146. Sri Guru Granth Sahib: *Raag Asa*, p. 471.
ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥ ਛੁਰੀ ਵਗਾਇਨਿ ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਤਾਗ ॥
147. Ibid., *Raag Majh*, p. 141.
ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੂਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥
148. Siddqi, Abdul Hamid (trans.) : *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. I, pp. 171, 173.
Kiein, F.A. : *The Religion of Islam*, p. 127.
149. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Majh*, p. 140.
ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ ॥ ਜੋ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥
150. Ibid., *Raag Majh*, pp. 140-141.
ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥ ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥
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ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਖੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥
ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ ॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ ॥
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ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ ॥
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ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ ॥
ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥੧॥
(Also see *Raag Dhanasri*, p. 662)
151. Nizami, K.A. : op. cit., p. 173.
152. Ashraf, K.M. : op. cit., p. 98; Jaffar, S.M. : *Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 16-17.
153. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Dhanasri*, p. 662.
ਕਾਦੀ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਮਲੁ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੀਆ ਘਾਇ ॥
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154. Ibid., *Raag Ramkali*, p. 903.
ਕਲਿ ਕਲਵਾਲੀ ਸਰਾ ਨਿਬੇੜੀ ਕਾਜੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਹੋਆ ॥
155. Ibid., *Raag Ramkali*, p. 951.
ਕਾਜੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਬਹੈ ਨਿਆਇ ॥ ਫੇਰੇ ਤਸਬੀ ਕਰੇ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥
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156. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 350.
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157. Grewal, J.S. : op. cit., pp. 16-17.
158. Ashraf, K.M. : op. cit., p. 102.
159. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Mallar*, p. 1286.
ਕੁਲਹਾਂ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਬਾਵਲੇ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਵਡੇ ਨਿਲਜ ॥ ਚੂਹਾ ਖਡ ਨ ਮਾਵਈ ਤਿਕਲਿ ਬੰਨੈ ਛਜ ॥
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160. McLeod, W.H. : op. cit., p. 159.
161. Grewal, J.S. : op. cit., pp. 51-52.
162. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Dhanasri*, p. 663.
ਖਤ੍ਰੀਆ ਤ ਧਰਮੁ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਹੀ ॥
163. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 471.

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ਗਊ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰੁ ਲਾਵਹੁ ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥
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Most of the exegetical works on the *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib* state that in medieval India government levied a toll tax on the milch animals. Actually, in addition to land revenue peasants were required to pay *gau charai* or *gau shumari* a sort of grazing tax on cows exceeding the permissible numbers. See Habib, Irfan, op. cit., p. 244. All milch animals — goats, cows and buffaloes were taxed. See Lanepool : *Medieval India*, Kirpal Singh : *The Adi Guru Granth as Source of History*.

164. Bloomfield, Maurice (trans.) : *Atharva Veda*, VI. 75, VII. 13.
Shastri, R. (trans.) : *Kautilya's Arth-Shastra*, Book III.1.
165. Nizami, K.A. : op. cit., p. 322; Grewal, J.S. : op. cit., p. 39.
166. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Asa*, p. 418.
ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾ ਮੀਰੁ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ ॥ ... ...
ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਨ ਹੋਆ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

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— A BIOGRAPHY —

Birth

The tract between the rivers Beas and Chenab was "the theatre of new nationality and cradle of new religion" in the words of Robert Needham Cust. It is intimately connected with the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev as "there he was born and there he died, there he formed his school, there dwell his descendants and followers...."[1] In this tract of land there was a village named Talwandi. It was predominantly populated by the Bhattis of Rajput origin.[2] In the course of time, these Bhatti tribes had converted to Islam. In the time of Bahlol Khan Lodhi (1451-1488 CE), the founder of Lodhi ruling dynasty of Delhi, there lived in this village one prominent Muslim Bhatti chief, named Rai Bhoi, and the village was called after him Talwandi Rai Bhoi. He was succeeded by his son, Rai Bular, who was contemporary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.

Talwandi was originally built by a Hindu king called Raja Virat. It was sacked and destroyed several times during the various invasions. Rai Bular restored it, and built a fort on the summit of the tumulus in which he lived. Talwandi is situated about thirty miles south-west of Lahore, the ancient capital of the Punjab.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev's parents, Mehta Kalyan Das and Tripta Devi, belonged to the Khatri caste of the Hindus. About Khatri caste it has been significantly remarked that "under Mohammedan rulers in the West they have risen to high administrative posts. There is a record of a Khatri *diwan* of Badakhshan and a Khatri governor of Peshawar under the Afghans. Emperor Akbar's famous revenue minister, Todar Mal, was a Khatri."[3] In the Punjab, the Khatris were not a mercantile community. Many of them held land and followed various avocations.[4] Mehta Kalyan Das, son of Shiv Ram Das, was a village revenue official, who is also known as *patwari*. He was also a land holder in the service of the village chief, Rai Bular.[5]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev was born in 1469 CE in this village (Talwandi) which has since been named as Nanakana Sahib (in the present-day district of Sheikhupura, now in Pakistan). There has been a lot of controversy over the month in which he was born. *Janamsakhis*, i.e., the traditional biographical accounts of the life of Sri

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Guru Nanak Dev, give four different versions :

1. The *Puratan Janamsakhi* is based on the manuscript carried to England by H.T. Colebrooke, and preserved there in the old India Office Library. Its main characteristics are:
   i) it does not mention Bhai Bala, who is a dominant figure in another *Janamsakhi*;
   ii) its language is very precise, written in old style similar to that of the *Adi Sri Guru Granth*. It is believed to have been compiled in 1634 CE as this date has been indicated in its text;
   iii) according to this version, Sri Guru Nanak Dev was born in the month of *Vaisakh* and not *Katak*.
2. *Meharban's Janamsakhi*, written by Manohar Das Meharban (1581-1640 CE) was the son of infamous Pirthi Chand. This *Janamsakhi* contains the earliest exposition and commentaries on the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Like *Puratan Janamsakhi* it too does not mention Bhai Bala and gives *Vaisakh*, and not *Katak*, as the month of the Guru's birth.
3. Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi* is the most popular version. It is claimed that it was dictated by a life-long companion of the Guru, viz., Bhai Bala, at the instance of the second Guru. However, the internal evidence does not support this claim. It was most probably produced in the second half of the 17th century. It has the following peculiarities:
   i) It is dominated by Bhai Bala who introduces himself as life-long companion of the Guru.
   ii) Since it has been the most easily available version, it has spawned numerous other versions scattered all over the country.
   iii) The language used in this version is essentially colloquial and definitely dates later than that of *Puratan Janamsakhi* or *Janamsakhi Meharban*.
   iv) This *Janamsakhi* gives the date of birth of Sri Guru Nanak Dev as *Katak puranmassi* (full moon day of *Katak*).
4. Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* is credited to Bhai Mani Singh, a Sikh theologian-warrior, and martyr of first half of the 18th century. It is based on first *var* of Bhai Gurdas which is the earliest account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's life. Though it does mention the name of Bhai Bala in its account, it definitely is not dominated by him in its narration. With regard to the date of birth of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, it endorses the date given in the *Puratan* and *Meharban's Janamsakhis*, viz., the month of *Vaisakh*.

Dr Ernest Trumpp was the first non-Sikh scholar who made an effort to carefully study the *Janamsakhis*. According to him there are two sets of *Janamsakhis*, the old tradition and the later tradition. In the old tradition he counts *Puratan Janamsakhi* where there is no mention of Bhai Bala. The later tradition which "pretends to have knowledge of all details of the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev was, therefore, compelled to put forth, as voucher for its sundry tales and stories, Bhai Bala, who is said to have been

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the constant companion of Sri Guru Nanak from his youth up, whereas our old *Janamsakhi* does not even once mention Bhai Bala. If Bhai Bala had been a constant companion of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and a sort of mentor to him as he appears now in the current *Janamsakhi*, it would be quite incomprehensible why never a single allusion should have been made to him in old tradition."[6]

The writers who advocate that Sri Guru Nanak Dev's natal month was *Katak* give the following arguments :

i) The Sikhs have been celebrating the birth anniversary of the Guru in the month of *Katak*. Actually, nobody knows when this practice started, although Macauliffe stated that it started in the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[7] All the Sikhs could not have stopped celebrating Guru's birth anniversary in *Vaisakh* at the instance of one man (Giani Sant Singh in this case), however highly placed that person might have been. So, the actual practice of celebrating Guru's birthday goes a long way in favour of *Katak*.

ii) In the eyes of the faithful, Bhai Bala's *Janamsakhi* holds supreme. It is believed, albeit erroneously, that it had been written by the life-long companion of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, at the instance of Sri Guru Angad Dev, the second Guru. This gives the date of birth of the Guru to be in the month of *Katak*.

iii) In 1823 CE, Bhai Santokh Singh completed his *Nanak Parkash*, one of the most popular works being recited in the gurdwaras. It also gives the date of birth of the Guru in the month of *Katak*. It is, therefore, argued that had the date of Guru's birth been in *Vaisakh*, Bhai Santokh Singh would not have stuck to *Katak*.

But the following arguments appear to be more convincing in favour of *Vaisakh* as the month of birth of the Guru.

i) All old records like *Puratan Janamsakhi* which is definitely older than Bhai Bala's and Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhis*, give the Guru's natal month as *Vaisakh*. It is argued that these accounts should have mentioned *Katak*, had this been the natal month.

ii) There are a number of accounts of Sri Guru Nanak Dev written by the descendants of the Gurus besides Meharban, grandson of Sri Guru Ram Das, who wrote the *Janamsakhi* mentioned above. One is *Mehma Parkash* compiled by Sarup Das Bhalla in 1776 CE. Another is *Sri Guru Nanak Dev Bans Parkash* by Sukhwasi Rai, an old manuscript recently published by the Punjabi University, Patiala. All these works mention that Sri Guru Nanak Dev was born in the month of *Vaisakh*.

iii) In another way too it has been proved that the Guru was born in the month of *Vaisakh*. It is accepted that the life span of Sri Guru Nanak Dev was seventy years, five months, and seven days, and it is also accepted that the Guru died on *Asu Sudi* 10, 1596 BK. If we calculate on this basis, we come to the conclusion that the Guru was born in the month of *Vaisakh*. Karam Singh 'Historian' who conducted a thorough probe into the date of birth of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in his book, *Katak ké Vaisakh*, has proved conclusively that Sri Guru Nanak Dev was born in the month of *Vaisakh*.[8]

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On his birth, the child was named Nanak, after the name of his sister, Nanaki. '*Nanaki*' in local dialect means belonging to mother's parents, and she being the first child, was born at the parental village of her mother, Mata Tripta. It was, till recently, the usual practice in Punjab to give the first son - daughter/daughter - son, the same name, for example, Kartar Singh - Kartar Kaur / Kirpal Kaur - Kirpal Singh, etc.

Childhood and Life at Talwandi

At the village Talwandi, now known as Nanakana Sahib, there are several places associated with the childhood and youth of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. There stands a beautiful building on the place where he was born (Gurdwara Janam Asthan).[9] On the spot where he used to play with the children of his age, stands Gurdwara Bal Lila. Here, Rai Bular, the chief of the village, constructed a tank, which was subsequently enlarged by Diwan Kaura Mal, who was finance minister of Zakaria Khan (1726-45 CE) and Mir Mannu (1748-1753 CE).[10] He was an admirer of the Guru and his Sikhs.

At the age of seven, Sri Guru Nanak Dev was taken to a Hindu priest (*purohita*) for schooling. All accounts agree that Sri Guru Nanak Dev impressed his teacher. All the *Janamsakhi* accounts concur that the Guru did not study with him for long. Then he was taken to a Muslim priest (*mullah*) for further education. He too was impressed with his pupil, but could not satisfy the curiosity of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. The traditional accounts assert that Sri Guru Nanak Dev did not study at all, which does not appear to be correct. About the scholastic attainment of the Master, Macauliffe rightly states, "The scholastic ignorance of the founders of great religions has been made the subject of many a boast on the part of their followers. The object, of course, is that the acquirements and utterances of the religious teachers may be attributed solely to the divine inspiration. We see no reason for ascribing a want of education to the founder of Sikh religion, and the manner in which his learning was acquired is not difficult to understand. Had he remained at the humble village school, there is no reason to suppose that he would have acquired any considerable knowledge, but in the dense forests around Talwandi were to be found ascetics and anchorets who sought the extreme retirement of the locality for the combined objects of undisturbed prayer and escape from the persecution by the tyrannous rulers. All the *Janamsakhis* are unanimous in stating that Sri Guru Nanak Dev courted the retirement of the forest and the society of the religious men who frequented it. Several of them were profoundly versed in Indian religious literature of the age. They had also travelled far and wide within the limits of Hindustan, and met its renowned religious teachers. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, thus, became acquainted with the latest teachings of Indian philosophers and reformers."[11] From his verses preserved in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scripture, it is evident that Sri Guru Nanak Dev had a clear understanding of the scriptures of the Hindus as well as those of the Muslims. He was well-versed in Persian and has made liberal use of Persian words in his verses. The knowledge acquired at Talwandi stood him in good stead, when he joined service at Sultanpur (in present-day East Punjab district of Kapurthala).

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Places Associated with Sri Guru Nanak Dev at Nanakana Sahib :

A) GURDWARA KIARA SAHIB

Here, young Sri Guru Nanak Dev was sent to tend cattle in the nearby forest. One day, it is said, Sri Guru Nanak Dev fell asleep and his cattle damaged crops in an adjoining field. The owner of that field remonstrated with young Sri Guru Nanak Dev and lodged a complaint to Rai Bular who summoned Sri Guru Nanak Dev and his father and inquired about the matter. Subsequently, when he visited the field, he found no signs of damage.

B) GURDWARA MAL JI SAHIB

Here, young Sri Guru Nanak Dev used to take rest under the shade of a tree. The tree which is known as Mal ji Sahib, is held sacred by the Sikhs. As the legend goes, a cobra once shadowed Sri Guru Nanak Dev's head against the sun while he slept under this tree.

C) GURDWARA PATTI SAHIB

It is said that Sri Guru Nanak Dev was sent here to learn Persian alphabet from the *maulavi*. This shrine marks the place where the Master had a long discourse with the *maulavi* on spiritual connotations of the letters of the alphabet, which the Guru later recorded in his *bani*.

D) GURDWARA SACHA SAUDA

Once Mehta Kalyan Das, Sri Guru Nanak Dev's father, gave him some money for trading, and instructed him to strike a good deal buying merchandise for sale later at a profit. Accompanied by a servant, he went to Chuharkana, a market about 20 miles from Talwandi. On the way, he noticed a party of mystics who had had no food for the last several days. Moved by innate compassion, Sri Guru Nanak Dev purchased eatables with the entire sum and fed the starving *sadhus*. This incident is known as *Sacha Sauda* or the 'true bargain'. Later, Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a gurdwara at the site at Chuharkana, in the district of Sheikhupura, to highlight this remarkable event in the life of the Master.

E) GURDWARA TAMBOO SAHIB

Sri Guru Nanak Dev realised that his '*Sacha Sauda*' would not be approved by his father. So, instead of going home directly he sat down under a tree outside his village. It was here that his father found him and on being told what Sri Guru Nanak Dev did with the money, rebuked and punished him. The old tree under which he sat, is still preserved and is known as Tamboo Sahib, meaning 'the tent' since the tree had provided cover to the Guru like a tent. Later, a gurdwara was built in commemoration of this event.[12]

All the *Janamsakhis* agree that young Sri Guru Nanak Dev had a contemplative mind. Such incidents, as mentioned above, convinced Kalyan Das that his son was not an ordinary boy. His fear was that Sri Guru Nanak Dev might one day become an anchorite and leave home. His meditative tendencies at such an early stage of life worried his parents. In order to provide diversion and to interest him in secular life, they decided that he should get married. Accordingly, Sri Guru Nanak Dev was married to Sulakhani, daughter of Mul Chand, a *patwari* of village Pakhoke (in the

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present-day district of Gurdaspur in East Punjab).

There is some controversy regarding the Guru's age at the time of marriage and the place where the marriage was solemnised. *Janamsakhis* give different ages. *Puratan Janamsakhi* gives 12 years, Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi* 14 years, Meharban's 16 years and Bhai Bala's 18 years. But all the *Janamsakhis*, except Bhai Bala *Janamsakhi*, agree that the marriage was arranged at Talwandi and not at Sultanpur.[13] Whatever the case, the marriage did not deflect Sri Guru Nanak Dev from his chosen path.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev's sister, Nanaki, was married to Jai Ram who was working as *amil* at Sultanpur,[14] then capital of Jalandhar Doab. When Jai Ram came to know that Sri Guru Nanak Dev did not show interest in any vocation of life and that his parents were greatly distressed on that account, he invited Nanak to come to Sultanpur. Sri Guru Nanak Dev accepted the offer and decided to shift to Sultanpur. All members of the family approved of this decision except his wife, Sulakhani. She was greatly saddened. The author of *Puratan Janamsakhi* has given a dialogue between husband and wife which has been preserved by the *Janamsakhi* writers. Its English rendition is given below :

> The news of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's leaving for Sultanpur, saddened his wife. Addressing him, she said, 'You never expressed much affection for me here, and when gone, what is there to bring you back ?' Sri Guru Nanak Dev answered affectionately, 'O, guileless woman ! I have not been doing much here, and do not know what I shall do there. I am of no use to you (here).' Then she again supplicated, 'When you are even just sitting at home, it is like I possess the sovereignty of the whole world. Without you, this world is not worth living.' Sri Guru Nanak Dev was touched by these words and said, 'Do not be sad. Day by day, your sovereignty shall prevail.' Then she said, 'I do not want to stay back alone. Take me along with you.' But Sri Guru Nanak Dev said, "O woman-of-god, let me go now. When I am able to secure some livelihood, I shall call you there. Pray, agree to it.' She then silently acquiesced.[15]

Stay at Sultanpur

Sri Guru Nanak Dev was warmly received by his brother-in-law, Jai Ram. He introduced Sri Guru Nanak Dev to his master, Daulat Khan Lodhi, son of Tatar Khan Lodhi. The latter was the governor of Lahore and he had given to his son Daulat Khan, the area of Sultanpur as *jagir*. Tatar Khan was a cousin of Behlol Khan Lodhi, who was founder of the Lodhi dynasty in the imperial city of Delhi.

Daulat Khan, prior to the death of his father and subsequent appointment as governor of Lahore around 1504 CE, used to live at Sultanpur, to manage the affairs of his *jagir*. In those days revenue was collected in kind, mostly grain, and there was a great scarcity of currency. According to Mooreland, Lodhi kingdom was landlocked, as it had no seaport in it. The movement of Mughals on its north-western frontier had stopped the traders from entering India. Consequently, there was not much trade. Under these circumstances, like other *jagirdars*, Daulat Khan used to collect revenue in kind and store it in godowns. The *chaudhris* and *muqaddams* used to send revenue in the form of grain to their master.[16] Grain was distributed daily to his employees, his

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personal servants as well as men of his army, and few were given salaries in cash. Often they were given a piece of land and a fixed quantity of food grain for daily use. Hence, the department of stores and food supplies was of vital importance. Daulat Khan was always in need of dependable and honest men to handle his stores and supplies. According to Meharban, Sri Guru Nanak Dev was introduced to him as a very honest man and, therefore, was appointed as store-keeper.

As a store-keeper, it was the duty of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to weigh the grain and give it to the people as per the sanctioned quantity. Nothing could be taken out of the store without proper authority. Whenever any needy *faqir* or *sadhu* visited Sri Guru Nanak Dev for taking foodgrain, he would go to his master for permission which was invariably granted. The store-keeper himself was allowed a daily quota of food grain which was always distributed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev to the needy and the poor. Soon Sri Guru Nanak Dev became one of the most popular figures of the town.[17]

During his stay at Sultanpur, Sri Guru Nanak Dev brought his wife to live with him. Here his two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das, were born.

The *Puratan Janamsakhi* has given the following daily routine of Sri Guru Nanak Dev:

> By night, continually prayer was said, and when as yet a quarter of night was remaining, Sri Guru Nanak Dev went to the river to bathe. When it was dawn of the day he dressed up for his work and taking the account book sat down in his office to write.[18]

While at Talwandi, Sri Guru Nanak Dev had got acquainted with Mardana, a Muslim rebeck player, who used to recite the compositions of various *bhagats*. Sri Guru Nanak Dev enjoyed listening to his music. Now, when Mardana learnt that his friend was a store-keeper at Sultanpur, he moved there. In the morning and evening he used to recite hymns. But all this was not to last long. There occurred an event which changed the entire life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. It can be called a turning-point or a landmark in the early stages of Sikh history.

Near Sultanpur, there is a stream named Bayeen, a tributary of the river Beas. Sri Guru Nanak Dev used to go there for bathing. One morning he was seen going towards the river and could not be traced for three days. Most probably he remained in deep contemplation unnoticed during this period. But this disappearance has been described by the *Janamsakhi* writers in the following words :

> According to the order of the Lord, servant took him away to the threshold of the Lord. There the Guru had an interview with the Almighty Lord, who charged him with the mission of preaching the glory of His Name. Then came the order, 'Sri Guru Nanak Dev on whom thy favourable look is, on him also Mine.' My name is Supreme Brahm, thy name is Guru.[19]

In the *Puratan Janamsakhi*, the continued dialogue has been recorded as follows :

> God said to him, 'I am with thee. I have made thee happy, and also those who shall take thy name. Go and repeat Mine, and cause others to do likewise. Abide uncontaminated by the world. Practise the remembrance of My name, charity, ablutions, worship and meditation. I have given thee this cup of nectar, a pledge of My regard.' The Guru stood up and made obeisance. He then sang the following hymn:

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'Were I to live for millions of years and drink the air for my nourishment;
Were I to dwell in a cave where I beheld not sun or moon, and could not even dream
of sleeping,
I shall still not be able to express Thy worth; how great shall I call Thy Name ?
O true Formless One, Thou art in Thine own place —
As I have often heard I tell my tale — if it please Thee, show Thy favour unto me.
Were I to be felled and cut in pieces, were I to be ground in a mill;
Were I to be burnt in a fire, and blended with its ashes,
I should still not be able to express Thy worth; how great shall I call Thy Name ?
Were I to become a bird and fly to a hundred heavens;
Were I to vanish from human gaze and neither eat nor drink,
I shall still not be able to express Thy worth; how great shall I call Thy Name ?
Nanak, had I hundreds of thousands of tons of paper
And a desire to write on it after the deepest research;
Were ink never to fail me, and could I move my pen like the wind,
I whould still not be able to express Thy worth; how great shall I call Thy Name ?'

Hereupon a voice was heard, 'O Nanak, thou hast seen my Sovereignty.' Then Sri Guru Nanak Dev said, 'O Sire, what is anything that a mortal can say, and what can be said or heard after what I have seen ? Even the lower animals sing Thy praises.' Upon this, the Guru uttered the beginning *slok* of *Jap(ji)* :

'The True One was in the beginning,
The True One was in the primal age.
The True One is, and, O Nanak,
The True One shall ever be.'[20]

According to Macauliffe, the well-known Sikh creedal statement known as the *Moolmantar* was also uttered by the Guru in the Divine presence. "There is but one God whose name is True, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great, and bountiful."[21] Macauliffe continues, "When Nanak had finished, a voice was heard again : 'O Nanak, to him upon whom My look of kindness resteth, be thou merciful, as I too shall be merciful. My name is God, the primal Brahm, and thou art the divine Guru.' The Guru then uttered the following hymn :

'Thou wise and omniscient, art an ocean;
how can I a fish obtain a knowledge of Thy limit ?
Wherever I look, there art Thou;
if I am separated from Thee, I shall burst.
I know neither Death the fisherman, nor his net.
When I am in sorrow, then I remember Thee.
Thou art omnipresent though I thought Thee distant.
What I do is patent unto Thee;
Thou beholdest mine acts, yet I deny them.
I have not done Thy work or uttered Thy name;
Whatever Thou givest, that I eat.
There is no other gate than Thine; to whose gate shall I go ?

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Nanak maketh one supplication —
Soul and body are all in Thy power.
Thou art near, Thou art distant, and Thou art midway.
Thou seest and hearest; by Thy power didst Thou create the world.
Whatever order pleaseth Thee, saith Nanak, that is acceptable.'

"Then according to the order of the Lord on the third day, Sri Guru Nanak Dev was brought back to where he had disappeared."[22] After this incident the Guru remained silent for one day. He broke his silence with his famous and significant pronouncement, "There is no Hindu and no Musalman." This utterance of the Guru was objected to by the *qazi* who complained to his master. Some people thought that Guru had become insane, and they attributed his insanity to the lack of frugality in distribution of stores. But the examination of accounts of the stores indicated that assumption to be baseless.

Daulat Khan, however, called the Guru to his presence and asked him to explain the meaning of his utterance, "There is no Hindu and no Musalman." The Guru's reply is recorded in a hymn : 'It is difficult to be a genuine Muslim. Acquire the necessary qualities before you call yourself a Muslim.'[23] The Guru explained to Daulat Khan that he had no ill-will against the Muslims. On this, he was invited to go to the mosque and join in the prayers along with other Muslims. The Guru agreed. But he did not participate in the prayer. On being asked, he replied that *qazi* who led the prayer was in fact only pretending. His mind was somewhere else. The nawab then asked the *qazi* if Nanak was correct, and *qazi*, after initial hesitation, admitted his lapse. Daulat Khan got the point and could not but admire the Guru. The Guru also told the nawab that while in prayer the latter's mind also was in Kabul purchasing horses. Nawab was astounded at the statement and admitted the truth.[24]

Now the Guru felt the inner urge to go out and preach the name of God. Soon after, he left his wife and children and undertook many long journeys with the sole object of carrying out his divine mission. Bhai Gurdas has beautifully recorded, "Nanak looked around and found the whole world burning,... he started on his journeys to save the world."[25]

There is a difference of opinion about the duration of the Guru's stay at Sultanpur. According to Meharban, the Guru stayed at Sultanpur for two-and-a half years. According to Bala's *Janamsakhi*, he lived there for more than a decade. It is difficult to find out the exact duration. It is generally believed, however, that the Guru stayed at Sultanpur for about a decade, and left Sultanpur at the age of thirty or so.

Udasis or Itineraries

It is very difficult to give an accurate account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's long itineraries for lack of source material. The earliest account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's travels written by Bhai Gurdas mentions only some of the places visited by the Guru. The *Janamsakhis* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev also do not provide adequate information relating to his travels. Under the circumstances one may rely on the following three factors:

i. Trade routes available in the first quarter of the 16th century.

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ii. Old gurdwaras constructed to commemorate Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit at various places.

iii. Early traditions of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's travels recorded in Bhai Gurdas' *vars* and the *Janamsakhis*.

Thus, Sri Guru Nanak Dev's itineraries may be described as follows :

1. EASTERN AND SOUTHERN UDASIS

According to Meharban's *Janamsakhi*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev turned towards South after visiting Jagannath Puri in Orissa. This appears to be more reasonable as a person who is to visit South need not come back to Punjab to resume his journey for South India. Secondly, Jagannath Puri was well-linked with routes from the South. In the *Puratan Janamsakhi* it has been stated that the Guru returned to Talwandi after twelve years of his first long itinerary. That also gives the indication that the Guru proceeded to the South, after finishing his eastern travels.

2. NORTHERN UDASI

The northern travels of the Guru took him to Tibet via Kashmir valley and the Himalayan Ranges. There is a hymn of the Guru in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, wherein he speaks of his travel to the Sumér Parbat, the modern Kailash mountain.

It is agreed in all *Janamsakhis* that the Guru undertook his northern travels after completing his eastern and southern itineraries.

3. UDASI TO THE WESTERN LANDS

This last visit was towards West and Central Asian countries, viz., Arabia, Iraq, Iran, etc.

The account of the Guru's travels which follows, is based on the book *Janamsakhi Parampara* .[26]

The First Itinerary towards East and South

The itineraries of Sri Guru Nanak Dev began from Sultanpur following the bestowal of the divine commission upon him. According to *Puratan Janamsakhi*, before turning towards east, the Guru went to Tulamba (modern Makhdumpur, Pakistan). But according to Bhai Bala's version, before leaving Central Punjab, Sri Guru Nanak Dev first went to Eminabad and then to Tulamba. At Eminabad, whose old name was Saidpur and which is about 35 miles west of Lahore, the Guru stayed with Lalo, a carpenter of scanty means. During his stay, he was invited by the town chief, Malik Bhago, to *Brahm Bhoj*. The Guru declined the invitation. Malik Bhago felt offended and asked the Guru as to why he had preferred Lalo's simple meal to the sumptuous food served by him in the *Brahm Bhoj*. The Guru explained that the food earned by honest and rightful means is sacred, while even dainty dishes prepared with ill-gotten money earned through exploitation and cruelty are sinful and not worth eating. The former is like the milk, while latter is like blood squeezed from the poor and innocent people.[27]

After visiting Eminabad the Guru proceeded towards Tulamba. Near Tulamba there used to live a man known as Sajjan Thug, who was a robber masquerading as a pious man. He had built a temple to attract the wayfarers, and in the darkness of

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night he used to rob them of their belongings and strangulate them. He had similar nefarious designs for Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Sri Guru Nanak Dev sensed his inclinations and when Sajjan was on his way to carrying out his plans, he found the Guru singing a hymn which exposed his deceitful ways by speaking of hypocrisy of a person who otherwise poses piety. Sajjan was awakened and fell at the Guru's feet. The Guru then made him understand that what he (Sajjan) had been doing was wrong and not righteous. Sajjan repented and vowed to follow the right path shown by the Guru.[28]

After Tulamba, the Guru visited Pakpattan. The old name of this town was Ajodhan which was changed to Pakpattan when Sheikh Farid settled there. The Guru had a long discourse with the successor of Sheikh Farid — Ibrahim, who was popularly known as Farid, the Second. The Guru collected verses of Sheikh Farid which may now be found in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The dialogue of the Guru with Farid II has been recorded in *Puratan Janamsakhi*.[29]

After meeting Sheikh Ibrahim at Pakpattan the Guru visited Karra and Pehowa. The Guru visited Kurukshetra on the occasion of a solar eclipse, which had attracted hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, besides *sadhus* and spiritual leaders. It seems, *inter alia*, that the discussion veered round to meat eating. The vegetarian Brahmins objected to meat on the plea that this act profaned the pious land of Kurukshetra. The Guru explained that meat eating is a non-issue, and that what matters is one's spiritual progress. The Guru is said to have uttered a hymn in this connection which is recorded in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* at page 1289. There is a historic gurdwara commemorating the Guru's visit.

From Kurukshetra the Guru proceeded to Hardwar.[30] There, people were throwing water towards east in the mistaken belief that through the sun the water would reach their thirsty ancestors. The Guru began to throw water towards west. When questioned he said that he was watering his fields in Punjab. They laughed, but soon realised the futility of their belief.[31]

After staying at Hardwar for some time, he proceeded to Kotdwar and from there onward to Pauri (Srinagar, district Tehri-Garhwal). Pandit Tara Singh Narotam, the author of *Gur Tirath Sangreh*, writes that at these places there are historical gurdwaras associated with the memory of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit. From Pauri, the Guru marched towards Joshimath, and on the way visited the famous Hindu pilgrimage centres of Kidar Nath and Badri Nath. The Guru took the well-known pilgrims' route, which was perhaps the only link then available between the districts of Tehri-Garhwal and Almora.[32]

The Guru followed pilgrims' route and reached a centre of Jogis in the vicinity of modern Durga Pipal. This place is 33 miles east of Haldwani. There is a tree of sweet soapnut in Haldwani which, according to local tradition, was sweetened by the divine presence of the Guru. The gurdwara marking the sacred spot where the Guru stayed is now reverentially called Reetha Sahib.

From Reetha Sahib, Sri Guru Nanak Dev descended into the Tarai area and winding his way along the Deoha stream, arrived at a place which was then called Gorakhmata, a centre of Siddh-Jogis, named after the founder of their order,

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Gorakhnath, at a distance of 30 miles from Reetha Sahib.[33] Here, he had a long discourse with Siddhas on matters of religion and metaphysics. The gist of this discourse has been recorded in *Siddh-Gost* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Later on, the place was named as Nanakmatta to perpetuate the memory of the Guru's visit.

From Gorakhmata Sri Guru Nanak Dev took a southerly route, which brought him to Tanda Vanjara, a town of the trading community of Vanjaras. The place is now situated in the district of Rampur. From there, travelling in the south-eastern direction, the Guru reached Gola, a sacred place of Hindus on the bank of the Sarda in the present day district of Kheri, 22 miles north-west of Lakhimpur.

At a short distance from Gola was flowing the Ghaggar river, which provided the most convenient route for Ajudhya (Ayodhya). Possibly, the Guru took a boat from here and reached Ayodhya, a very old centre of pilgrimage of Hindus — believed to be the birth place of Hindu demi-god Rama. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha refers to an old historical gurdwara at this place, marking the memory of the Guru's visit.[34]

From Ayodhya, Sri Guru Nanak Dev moved on and reached Tanda, another town of traders in district Faizabad, which constituted an important ferry in those days. From here he proceeded via Singholi to Nizamabad (present day district of Azamgarh). At this place again there is a historical gurdwara commemorating the Guru's visit. From Nizamabad the Guru proceeded to Prayag (Allahabad) about 90 miles away. The Purani Jhusi, a place near the Tribaini Sangam of Prayag, has a long-standing local tradition connected with the Guru's stay there.[35] From Jhusi he proceeded to Benares, 89 miles from Prayag, by a road which lay along the left bank of river Ganges.

At Benares, Sri Guru Nanak Dev had a long stay and had a lengthy discourse with Pandit Chatur Das on idol worship. The Guru exhorted him to cultivate inner virtues and not waste time on idols. During the visit he stayed in the Kamchha area at a short distance from present-day Benares Railway Station, where there is an old historical gurdwara marking the memory of his visit.[36] There being an old historical gurdwara at Gaya in memory of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit, we may conclude that the Guru visited Gaya also.[37] From Gaya, a *kucha* road led to Hajipur and passed through the place where later on the city of Patna developed. When the Guru reached there, there were only the ruins of the ancient city of Patliputra and no living town existed except Hajipur on the northern bank of the Ganges. At Hajipur, there is an old gurdwara commemorating the memory of the Guru's stay.[38]

From Hajipur, the Guru proceeded by the river route or by the road going along the bank of the river and reached Kantnagar (district Purnea) via Munger Bhagalpur. Kantnagar has an old gurdwara commemorating the stay of the Guru. From there the Guru reached the town of Malda which was situated at the confluence of the Ganges and the Mahananda, and was reputed as a Sufi centre. The tradition has it that a local merchant of Malda rendered great service to the Guru and received his blessings. The Guru had here a discourse with some local Sufi saints. From Malda, he travelled north, and passing through what we today call north Bihar, and north-west Bengal, reached the town of Dhubri in Kamrup. Dhubri, where subsequently Guru Tegh Bahadur raised

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a platform in the hallowed memory of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit, was in Assam, probably the first important place which was visited by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in that kingdom. This place was situated on the right bank of the Brahmputra river.[39]

At the time of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit, the modern region of Assam had two broad divisions with the Barna, a tributary of the Brahmputra, as the dividing line between the two. The region to the west of the Barna was called Kamrup and comprised the modern districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Gangpur and Cooch Bihar. To the east of the Barna lay the Asa Desh, mainly peopled by the Ahom tribe, an offshoot of the Shan tribe. Hieun Tsang calls the entire area by the name of Kamrup. The name Asa Desh appeared subsequently from the Ahoms carving out an independent country of their own in the eastern parts of the area. The *Puratan Janamsakhi* shows a clear awareness of the political division by dealing with Kamrup and Asa Desh separately.[40]

Dhubri is the chief town of the modern Goalpara district. After a short stay at Dhubri, the Guru proceeded along the Brahmputra on to Kamrup, a place near the modern town of Gauhati. Here, the Guru had an encounter with Nurshah, the lady chieftain who was famous for her charms and had nearly succeeded in misleading Bhai Mardana, the companion of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. The Guru made her understand the futility of her ways, and prevailed upon her to shed her villainy and belief in sorcery. She was impressed and became a follower of the Guru. After passing through the land of Kamrup, the Guru by the same river route entered Asa Desh ruled by Raja Swarg Narain (1497-1593 CE), a descendant of Samundar, the first known ancestor of the Ahoms.[41] Samundar has been mentioned in *Puratan Janamsakhi.*

Continuing his journey up the river Brahmputra, the Guru arrived at Golaghat which is today the *tehsil* town of district Sibsagar in the extreme east of Assam. The town was situated on the eastern bank of Dhanasri river. Here he entered the Dhanasri valley, called after the river of the same name flowing in the area. A tributary of the Brahmputra, this river rises in the Naga hills and going ahead forms the present day boundary between the districts of Sibsagar and Nowgong.[42]

From the Dhanasri valley, the Guru returned by the same river route as he had followed during his upward journey. At a point near Gauhati he changed his route and went to Shillong and then via Jowai and Jainti (or Jaintia) Hills, proceeded to Sylhet, another great Sufi centre of the area. At Sylhet (now in Bangladesh) there is an old gurdwara in memory of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to the place, a reference to which is found in Tara Singh Narotam's *Gur Tirath Sangreh.*[43] Between Sylhet and Chittagong there was a much-frequented road. The Guru presumably travelled by this road, while going to Chittagong. From there he travelled upward to Dhaka by boat, because Dhaka was, as it is today, easily accessible via the water-ways.[44]

Dhaka then did not have the political importance which it now enjoys. It was not the capital of the province, and was mainly known for the temple of the goddess Dhakeshwari to whom perhaps it owes its name. The Guru stayed at the site of the present day Raré Bazaar. The tradition of the Guru's stay is still current there. An old water well is associated with Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit. Bhai Gurdas mentioned

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Dhaka as a centre of Sikhism.[45]

Starting from Dhaka, Sri Guru Nanak Dev took the road leading to Jagannath Puri. On the way, he passed through Calcutta and Cuttack. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, Calcutta was no more than a big village, noted chiefly for its temple of goddess Kali. Tara Singh Narotam, in his book *Gur Tirath Sangreh*, writes that there used to be an old gurdwara at this place marking the memory of the Guru's visit.[46] According to the prevalent local tradition, the sacred spot is on the Harrison Road. Similarly, there is a strong tradition of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's going to Cuttack. Bhai Vir Singh refers to an old gurdwara at the place bound up with this local tradition.

From Cuttack, the Guru took the pilgrims' route to reach Jagannath Puri. At this place Sri Guru Nanak Dev observed Brahmins performing *aarti* before the idol of Jagannath with salver containing earthern lamps, etc. He told them that nature in its various ways is performing the *aarti* of the Almighty and that it is of no use to follow the rituals. The famous hymn alluding to this theme is recorded on page thirteen of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The biography of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu by Ishwar Dass states that Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Chaitanya met at the historic temple of Puri, and performed a joint *kirtan* service. There is a small gurdwara at this place commemorating the Guru's visit.[47]

After a short stay at Puri, the Guru probably returned to Cuttack to resume his southward journey. According to the *Puratan Janamsakhi* version, the Guru ended his first *udasi* with the visit to Puri, and returned to the Punjab, and it was only after some time, that he set out on his second or southward *udasi*. The Meharban version, however, is different, and treats the eastern and the southern journeys as a single *udasi*, which seems more plausible. The geographical location of Puri is such that if the Guru had a southern journey in mind he would most likely have started from there instead of coming back all the way to the Punjab and start from there.

From Cuttack, the Guru took the route leading towards Kanchipuram. Kanchipuram (Kanjivaram), is a famous centre of Hindu pilgrimage, 45 miles south of the present city of Madras (Chennai). At the time, Kanchipuram was in the Vijyanagar kingdom and was noted for its splendid temples of Siva and Vishnu.[48]

From here, the Guru proceeded on to Tiruchirapali (old Trichnapali) and paid a visit to the historic temple of Sri Rangam, built on the island formed between the Cauvery and Coleroon rivers. It was here that Ramanuja, the famous saint of the Deccan, had settled down towards the end of his life. According to tradition, there used to be a gurdwara there in the name of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. This sacred shrine now seems to have disappeared for lack of maintenance.

From Tiruchirapali, the Guru sailed down the Cauvery river and reached Nagapattinam, a very old port of South India. This port had developed due to many centuries of close sea-contact with Trincomalee, a Ceylonese port on the eastern coast of that island, and sailing boats plied frequently between the two places. Trincomalee had a famous Hindu temple, which was later on pulled down by the Portuguese. A little to the south of Trincomalee was another port called Mattiakullam or Madakulpa, which was subsequently rechristened by the Dutch as Baticaloa or

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Batticaloa. This port and the area behind it was under the influence of Tamil culture. It was from here, as the Hindu myth goes, that Lanka was burnt by Hanuman. All indications point that Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded to Ceylon from Nagapattinam, and Batticaloa was the first important place of his stay on the island.[49]

The visit of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Ceylon is confirmed by various contemporary sources. The evidence of the well-known writing *Hakikat Rah Mukam Rajé Shibnabh ki* (*Story of the Route Leading to Raja Shibnabh's Place*) point to the prevailing belief of Guru Arjun's period about Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to Ceylon. The writer of these lines who was specially deputed by the Punjabi University to investigate the matter on the spot, discovered 12 miles south of Batticaloa, a place called Kurukal Mandap enshrining the memory of the visit, some four hundred and fifty years ago of a "Siddh Baba". This tradition may be identified with Sri Guru Nanak Dev who visited Ceylon approximately at the same time. At the time of the International Seminar organised by the Punjabi University in connection with the 500th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in 1969, Dr W.W. Karunaratna, Assistant Director, Archaeological Department, Colombo, presented a paper in which he announced the recent discovery of an inscription giving an account of a dialogue between the then *raja* of Kotte and one "Jnanakacharya".[50] According to the author of the paper, this great man was the same as "Nanakacharya" or "Sri Guru Nanak Dev". One strong reason that we feel inclined to accept this view is that the views of this holy man, "Nanakacharya", regarding the Supreme Being, idol worship and caste system were exactly the same as those of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.

After staying for sometime at Kurukal Mandap, the Guru started in the southerly direction and reached Katargama, a place of pilgrimage situated in the extreme south-east. Situated on the Manak Ganga, Katargama was a Hindu *tirath* having many mythical traditions associated with Siva's son Katargama. From here Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded to Sitawaka (now-a-days Avisvella) via Badulla and Nuwara Eliya. The latter place is also called Sita Eliya fom the myth of Sita having spent her period of captivity there. Sitawaka finds mention in the aforementioned *Hakikat Rah Mukam Rajé Shibnabh ki*. At Sitawaka, there used to live one Changa Bhatra who was a follower of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Raja Shibnabh appears to be a Shaivite *raja* on the eastern coast of Ceylon near Batticaloa. Seven kingdoms which were there in the early decades of the sixteenth century had sunk in ocean as recorded in *History of Ceylon*. Raja Shibnabh might have been an ancestor of one of them.

Starting from Kotte, the Guru reached Anuradhapura, a capital town of Ceylon in olden times. Continuing his journey, he reached the port of Mannar near the modern town of Talaimannar.[51]

At Mannar, Sri Guru Nanak Dev left Ceylon and sailed for Rameshwaram which was only 20 miles from there. On the way, he passed through Setbandh which, according to the Hindu belief, was constructed by the mythic king Rama of the epic *Ramayana*, at the time of his attack on Lanka (Ceylon). Muslims, however, call it the Adam's Bridge.

At Rameshwaram, there is an old gurdwara enshrining the memory of Sri Guru

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Nanak Dev's visit. It is called Nanak Udasi Math Gurdwara.

Resuming his journey, the Guru proceeded to Trivandrum via Ramnadpuram. On the way, he passed through the places called Palam and Kottayam. According to Sikh records, there used to be a gurdwara of Sri Guru Nanak Dev situated midway between the two places and was called after both the places by the name of Palam-Kottayam or Palliam Kottai gurdwara. According to *Mehma Parkash*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev met a group of Siddhas, who ridiculed his precept that one should share whatever one possesses. The Siddhas gave him one grain of sesame seed to be shared with others. The Guru asked Mardana to pound it and after mixing it with water shared it with all. At Trivandrum (present-day Thiruvnanthpuram), he visited the famous Hindu temple of Anantpuram.

Starting from there, Sri Guru Nanak Dev took a northerly route, and passing through the Nilgiri Hills, proceeded on to Bidar. Bidar in those days was an important town being the capital of one of the off-shoots of the Bahmani Kingdom. At the place where the Guru stayed during his brief sojourn, a historical gurdwara stands now. It is stated that this site was then a grove of trees outside the town of Bidar.[52]

From Bidar, the Guru continued his northward journey and at a distance of one hundred and seventeen miles, arrived at Nanded which today is recognised as one of the most important centres of Sikhism. Generally, in public memory, it is associated with Guru Gobind Singh alone, but the place also has an old gurdwara of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in memory of his visit to the place. This gurdwara is now called Gurdwara Mal Tekri.[53]

After a brief stay here, the Guru resumed his journey. Travelling in the north-westerly direction, and possibly via Deogiri or Daulatabad, he came to Baroach, a famous port of those days situated at the mouth of the Narmada river. Outside the Baroach railway station there is an old gurdwara called Nanakwari, which commemorates the Guru's visit to the place. This gurdwara enjoys an old annual *jagir* of seventy-five rupees, which was granted by the British in the eighteenth century — a fact which also points to its historicity. Probably, for his onward journey, the Guru took the sea route. After this he proceeded to the Girnar Rocks and is believed to have travelled around them. We have a definite mention of these travels in the land of Saurashtra in the *Janamsakhi* of Meharban. A local tradition of the Girnar Rocks also contains a reference to Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to the place. Similarly, another local tradition says that at Junagarh, only 10 miles from the Girnar Rocks, there used to be a gurdwara in the name of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. This gurdwara does not exist today. From the Girnar Rocks (or Junagarh), the Guru set out for Ujjain.[54]

According to Meharban, Sri Guru Nanak Dev visited Ujjain and stayed near the famous Bharthari Cave of Ujjain. This city, even then, was an old place with rich historical traditions. Maharaja Bikramaditya after whom is named the *Bikrami Sammat* (BK), still in vogue in the country, had his capital at Ujjain. Similarly, Raja Bharthari Hari, who is said to have renounced the world and turned a yogi, belonged to this city. It is said that there used to be a famous temple here, the temple of Mahakal, who was said to be the patron-deity of the city.

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Resuming the journey from Ujjain, Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded to Ajmer, revered by the Hindus because of Pushkar Lake, and by the Muslims for the *dargah* of the renowned Chishti saint, Moin-ud-Din. According to Sikh records a gurdwara was built at the Pushkar Lake in memory of the Guru's visit.[55]

From Ajmer, the Guru came to Mathura, an ancient centre of pilgrimage of the Hindus. Hieun Tsang found it as a Buddhist centre with about two thousand Buddhist monks and nuns living in as many as twenty monasteries. By the time of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit, it had been usurped by the Hindus and had become a major seat of the Vaishnavite faith centring round the worship of Radha and Krishna. During the period of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, some of its temples were destroyed by Sikandar Lodhi, the Afghan ruler of Delhi and Agra.

According to the Meharban version, Sri Guru Nanak Dev visited the Keshva temple of Mathura. Later on, this temple was destroyed by Emperor Aurangzeb as part of his campaign against idol worship.

From Mathura, the Guru set out for the Punjab taking a slightly southerly route passing through Rewari, Hissar and Sirsa. Recently, at Sirsa, a place has been discovered marking the memory of the Guru's stay. Here he stayed with a Muslim *faqir* outside the town, and one of the walls of a house near it still bears the inscription — *Chilla Baba Nanak*.

Taking the route which connected Sirsa with Pakpattan and then led on to Dera Ismail Khan and Mankera, Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded to Pakpattan, famous for the *dargah* of the Chishti saint, Sheikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakkar. This place was on the right bank of the river Satluj. Baba or Sheikh Farid, as the founder of the Pakpattan *dargah* was called, lived in the thirteenth century, but the institution founded by him was still very popular on account of the piety of his successors. When Sri Guru Nanak Dev visited Pakpattan, one Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim) was on the *gaddi* of Baba Farid and was famous as Baba Farid the Second. Sri Guru Nanak Dev developed close spiritual association with this holy man. It was his second visit to this place.

From Pakpattan, Sri Guru Nanak Dev travelled on to Dipalpur and from there to Chunian *en route* to his home town, Talwandi. The *Puratan Janamsakhi* says that he returned to the Punjab after a long time of twelve years.[56]

Second Udasi — Towards North

After a brief stay at Talwandi, the Guru set out for Sultanpur. On the way, the first important place he came to was Lahore. His visit to Lahore is mentioned in all the *Janamsakhis*. There are two gurdwaras associated with the visit there — one near the modern Badami Bagh and the other in the Chohatta Bazaar Jawahar Mal. Here the Guru met one Duni Chand who was known for his wealth. Guru made him realise that the wealth would not accompany him after his death.[57] He was moved by the Guru's sermon and became his devotee. Subsequently, he helped the Guru in founding the village of Kartarpur, on the right bank of the river Ravi (now in the district of Sialkot in Pakistan).

From Lahore onwards, he passed through Ghawind, Khalra and Patti (in present-

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day district of Amritsar). Continuing his journey, Sri Guru Nanak Dev crossed the river Beas at the site of future town of Goindwal, a well-known ferry of those days, and proceeded to Sultanpur to see his sister, Nanaki.

Sultanpur was the starting point of the Guru's second *udasi*. He passed through the area of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur and crossing the river Satluj, reached *mukam* (abode) of Pir Buddan Shah. At the place where he stayed, developed later on the town of Kiratpur. This was founded by Sri Guru Hargobind, the sixth Nanak. In honour of the Guru's visit to the place, there stands a memorial called Charan Kanwal gurdwara.

At Kiratpur, the Guru entered the hilly region and proceeded to Mandi which had great importance being the confluence of several hill routes coming from different directions. At a distance of ten miles from Mandi was the famous *kund* (tank) of Skand Dhara called Rawalsar. The Guru visited this place and proceeded to Jwalaji, another Hindu centre now situated in *tehsil* Gopipur of district Kangra. From there, he travelled on to Kangra. From Kangra, he proceeded to Baijnath (old name Kirh Gram), which had at one time established its ascendancy over this area. The ruling tribe of Baijnath was now in a state of decline. Its chief was a tributary of the Kangra ruler.

From Baijnath, a route led through the Dulchi Pass to Kulu. From Kulu, the Guru came to the other side of the Chandarkalan Pass, where there is an old village called Mulana. The Guru stayed there for some time, a fact corroborated by a strong local tradition. Some sacred relics of the Guru are preserved there and worshipped by the people of the village.[58]

The eastern side of Spiti borders on west Tibet. Passing through the Shipki Pass, the Guru entered Tibet, and then proceeded along the Satluj river on to the Mansarovar Lake and the Sumér Parbat. In this area, the Guru came across a few groups of Siddh-Naths, and had detailed discourses with them on topics of mutual interest.

The visit to the Sumér Parbat is mentioned in *vars* of Bhai Gurdas and in all the *Janamsakhis*.[59] Images of Sri Guru Nanak Dev are said to be present in some of the temples of this area. The subject matter of the discourse with the Siddhas has been recorded in *Siddh-Gost* by Sri Guru Nanak Dev himself.[60]

From Sumér Parbat, Sri Guru Nanak Dev turned north-west, and after passing through Gartok and Rudok, entered Ladakh through the Chusul Pass.

From the Chusul Pass, the Guru came to Upshi, and then traversing a distance of 20 miles arrived at Karunagar. A remarkable point of this place is that in its neighbourhood there are a few villages where none except Sri Guru Nanak Dev is worshipped. At a short distance from Karunagar there is an old place called Hemus Gompa which cherishes the tradition of the Guru's visit. A stone is preserved there on which, as the story goes, the Guru seated himself during the visit. From there, the Guru took the route along river Indus towards Skardu. Skardu has a gurdwara named after Sri Guru Nanak Dev to mark his visit to the place.[61]

Skardu was linked with Kargil by an old route. The Guru took that route and reached Kargil. Starting from there, he passed through Dras, Zojila Pass and reached Baltal.

Resuming the journey, Sri Guru Nanak Dev descended into Pehlgam, a beautiful

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valley of Kashmir. At a short distance from here lay Mattan, the site of ruins of the historic Hindu temple of Martand. Here a Kashmiri *pandit* of Bij Bihara, Brahm Das by name, had a religious discourse with the Guru.[62] The place where the Guru stayed is marked by an old gurdwara. According to local tradition, during the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, six volumes of Sri Guru Granth Sahib were installed at this place.

From Mattan, called Mattan Sahib on account of its sanctity, Sri Guru Nanak Dev came to Anantnag. Here again there is an old historic gurdwara associated with him. From Anantnag, the Guru proceeded to Srinagar and on to Baramula along the Jhelum river. From Baramula, he wended his way to Hasan Abdal. Hasan Abdal is connected with the story of a Muslim *faqir*, Wali Kandhari, rolling down, out of rage, a heavy rock on the head of the Guru, which the Guru is said to have deflected with his outstretched hand. Tradition has it that the impression of his palm on the stone may still be seen in the gurdwara there.

At Hasan Abdal, called Panja Sahib by Sikhs, Sri Guru Nanak Dev decided to pay a visit to his family and turned towards Talwandi. Soon after, he reached Tila Bal Gudai, a major centre of the Siddh-Naths. Here the Guru met an assembly of these recluses and had a long religious discourse with them.

Resuming the journey, he crossed the Jhelum and the Chenab, and reached Sialkot. In honour of his visit to Sialkot there is a historic gurdwara there called Ber Sahib. From Sialkot, the Guru set out for Talwandi. On the way, he passed through several places out of which Pasrur and Saidpur (present-day Eminabad) are specially mentioned in the *Janamsakhi* accounts.[63]

Third Udasi — Towards West

After his stay at Talwandi, he, along with his devoted companion Mardana, decided to visit the countries of West Asia. From Talwandi, he came to Sultanpur to meet his sister and it was from here that he commenced his new journey.

From Sultanpur, he proceeded to Pakpattan. At Pakpattan, he renewed his contacts with Sheikh Ibrahim, Farid the Second. He had warm relations with him and always felt great pleasure in meeting him.[64]

After a short stay, he resumed his journey and reached Multan which was an ancient town of the Punjab and finds mention in the accounts of the Greek writers who accompanied Alexander the Great, as well as Hieun Tsang. On the way, he passed through Tulamba, where he had met Sajjan Thug and had brought about a transformation in him, whereby Sajjan had left his old dishonest ways and had become a devoted Sikh, spreading the Guru's message in the area. While at Multan, the Guru had a meeting with Baha-ud-Din, a descendant and successor of the famous Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Zakaria, founder of Suhrawardhy Sufi *silsilah*. Unlike the Chishti *silsilah* of Moin-ud-Din and Farid Ganj-i-Shakkar, the Suhrawardhy *Silsilah* adopted a collaborative attitude towards the state and the rulers.

From Multan, Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded to Uch, another ancient town of the area to which numerous references are available in early records. Before the

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Muslim advent it was known as Deogarh. Earlier in the thirteenth century, the well-known saint, Sheikh Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari, had settled down here and set up a centre of his Sufi faith. Here the Guru had a meeting with Sheikh Haji Abdullah Bukhari (d. 1526 CE), a successor of Sheikh Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari.[65]

Resuming his journey from Uch, the Guru reached Sukkur. The place has a local tradition of his having paid a visit there. From Sukkur, he travelled on to Lakhpat by boat. Lakhpat in the sixteenth century was called Basta Bander. There is an old gurdwara there marking the Guru's visit to the place.

From Lakhpat, Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded to the seashore where at Kuriani he visited the old temples of Koteshwar and Narayan Swami, which attracted pilgrims from far and near. At Kuriani there is a tank named after the Guru, commemorating his visit.

From here Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded westward and reached the port of Sonmiani or simply Miani, 50 miles west of the modern port of Karachi. At a few miles' distance to the north of Miani, there is the Nanak Dharamsal set up in honour of the Guru's visit.[66]

From here Sri Guru Nanak Dev took the sea-route to Mecca. According to Bhai Gurdas, the visit to Mecca preceded the visit to Baghdad. This is reproduced in the *Meharban Janamsakhi* where too the visit to Mecca is shown prior to other places in the area. On the basis of the evidence available it is logical to conclude that the Guru proceeded to Mecca by sea and returned by land.

The Guru boarded the ship for Arabia at Miani. The ship carrying the pilgrim-passengers including the Guru and his devoted companion Mardana, sailed along the coast of the Arabian Sea. The party landed at the port of Al Aswad from where Mecca is not far.[67]

Mecca was an old town. Even before it became a religious centre of Islam, it was widely known as a centre of trade. The *Quran* (*Sura* 106) refers to it as "a permanent resort of the caravans during summers as well as winters." Bhai Gurdas and the *Janamsakhi* accounts have given a graphic picture of the Guru's sojourn at Mecca, particularly of the deep impact he made on his audience by demonstrating that God is not only in the west but He is all-pervading. According to all evidence available to us, Sri Guru Nanak Dev preferred the land route for his return from Mecca. This was in line with the main purpose of this tour which had been undertaken for travels in the Muslim countries of West Asia, and not merely for a visit to the holy city of Mecca.

From Mecca, the Guru proceeded to Medina, another holy city of the Muslims, where Prophet Mohammad had lived for many years and had died. His mausoleum there attracts millions of visitors every year. The Guru's visit to Medina is mentioned in a *var* of Bhai Gurdas, and in the Bhai Mani Singh and Meharban *Janamsakhis*.[68]

There was a shorter route from Medina to Baghdad being normally preferred by travellers going towards India. It was a well-known route generally trodden by pilgrims going overland to or returning from Mecca and Medina. This route was first got charted by Khalifa Harun Rashid's wife, Zubaida Begum. It passed through Faid, but the part lying between Faid and Baghdad was rather difficult. On the whole, it was

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more convenient than the longer Palestine-Syria route. During the fourteenth century, Ibn Batuta adopted the same route for his journey from Baghdad to Mecca.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to Baghdad, a very old town of historical importance as a centre at once of trade, government and religion at that time under the rule of the Safavi dynasty of Iran, is clearly mentioned by Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Mani Singh. The historicity of the visit is established by the chance discovery of an old Turkish inscription making a concise reference to the visit of the Guru. The discovery was made during the days of the First World War by one Kartar Singh, an army engineer. The place of discovery was outside the city, a significant point which is confirmed by the statement of Bhai Gurdas that the Guru, on reaching Baghdad, "fixed up his place of stay outside (the town)". The English translation of the inscription is as follows :

> See how the most glorious Lord God fulfilled the wish that for Baba Nanak new structure be built. Seven saints helped (therein). Its date (worked out to be that) : the fortunate disciple made to flow new (well or spring) of water in the land 927.[69]

It may be pointed out here that many translations of the inscription are in vogue; one of them even eliminates the very name of Baba Nanak. Recently, a lot of checking and re-checking has been done by eminent scholars on this issue, sometimes with the help of foreign experts. After a thorough scrutiny of the matter, the scholarly opinion has veered round to acceptance of the translation given above.

Swami Ananda Acharya, in his well-known book *Snow Birds*, has given a long poem prepared on the basis of a certain inscription, regarding Sri Guru Nanak Dev, which he had seen earlier at Baghdad. This inscription, however, has not been traced so far. The translation of the inscription reads as follows :

> Here spoke Nanak to Faqir Bahlol, and for this sixty summers since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master's word like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey rose.[70]

Resuming his journey from Baghdad, Sri Guru Nanak Dev set out on the caravan route leading to Tehran, now the capital city of Iran. From Tehran, he followed the same route for Kandahar and Kabul. On the way, he passed through Meshed. In Bhai Mani Singh's *Janamsakhi*, there is a reference to the Guru's visit to this place. Meshed literally means 'place of martyrdom', and acquired its name from the fact that in early ninth century Khalifa Harun Rashid and his son and successor along with his (Harun's) son-in-law met with their tragic deaths here.

From Meshed, Sri Guru Nanak Dev proceeded towards Kandahar. From Kandahar, he journeyed to Kabul along the popular route which was also the main caravan route. Kabul, the present-day capital of Afghanistan, was, at the time of the Guru's visit, the seat of Babar's government. The Sikh connection with Kabul was carefully maintained even after Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Some Sikh preachers were stationed there to disseminate the teachings of the Gurus. At one time Bhai Gurdas also served as one of the Guru's representatives at Kabul. The Sikh *sangat* of Kabul was among the most notable of the *sangats* that grew up outside Punjab.

There existed a historical gurdwara in memory of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in the Pan-Chowk Jubba (present-day Jad-i-Mehmand) of the old city, but it was demolished

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in the forties of the twentieth century when the government of Kabul purchased the buildings of that area for their expansion and reconstruction plan for the city.[71]

All the evidence indicates that from Kabul the Guru followed the Jalalabad route, passed through the Khyber Pass and reached Peshawar, the 'Parshawar' of the *Tuzak-i-Babari*. The place was particularly noted for Gorakhhatri, an important centre of Siddh-Jogis. Earlier it had been a Buddhist centre, according to Cunningham. There used to be a *pipal* tree, more than 100 feet in height, about which the tradition was that Lord Buddha had sat under it. Babar refers to this tree in his memoirs. Later on, the place turned into a centre of Gorakhpanthi Siddhas. Gradually, however, it declined in importance and the Jogis abandoned it. According to Erskine, the main *serai* of Peshawar was raised over the site of the same centre later on. When in Peshawar, the Guru paid a visit to Gorakhhatri and had a long discourse with the residents, impressing upon them the futility of their religious rituals and exhorting them to lead a meaningful life spiritually inspired and socially fruitful. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to Gorakhhatri is mentioned in both the *Puratan* and *Meharban Janamsakhis*.[72]

From Peshawar, the Guru travelled homeward by the road which passed through Hasan Abdal, Tila Bal Gudai, Gujarat, etc., and led to Lahore.[73] On the way, he happened to pass through Saidpur. When he was at Saidpur, Babar attacked the place and inflicted atrocities upon the populace. Their miserable plight moved the compassionate heart of the Guru and the incident has been recorded in a most touching hymn, called *Babarvani*, which forms a part of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.[74]

From Saidpur, the Guru proceeded to Talwandi, and from there via Sultanpur he came to that spot on the bank of the Ravi where he founded a new settlement named Kartarpur (City of God) to provide a centre for the movement he had launched, and to give guidance to the large following he had attracted during his itineraries over a period estimated at 18-20 years. He called all the members of his family to live with him at Kartarpur. Even from here, he occasionally undertook short tours in the Punjab. One of them, according to Bhai Gurdas, was to Achal Batala and another to Multan.[75]

Last Phase of Life

Kartarpur, built with the help of Duni Chand, *amil* of Lahore, was a beautiful site on the right bank of the Ravi river. It was here that Sri Guru Nanak Dev gave practical shape to his teachings :

- The Guru always preferred and preached a householder's life. He called his wife and sons along with his parents to live with him.
- The Guru laid stress on active life and earning one's living through honest, hard work. He used to till the land, whose produce was used in *Guru ka langar*.
- The Guru believed in the sharing of one's earnings. Therefore, *langar* was started to feed all visitors, irrespective of the distinctions of caste or creed.
- Sri Guru Nanak Dev believed in meditation on the Name of God individually as well as in the congregation for spiritual elevation. The Guru during his long tours had been establishing *dharamsals*, centres for Sikh congregations.

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Kartarpur was to be a model.

During his stay at Kartarpur, Sri Guru Nanak Dev once went to a village now known as Kathunangal. There in the jungle, he met a young boy who was grazing his cattle. He greeted the Guru respectfully and began to chat with the Guru. The Guru was greatly impressed by his mature talk and enquired how he got such maturity at this young age. He replied, "My mother once asked me to light a fire. I found that smaller twigs caught fire easily so I thought I must have the company of the holy as early as possible." He subsequently became known among the Sikhs as Baba Budha, the venerable Sikh who performed the coronation ceremony of first five successors to Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[76] He died during pontificate of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Nanak.

– As is evident from the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, they were composed and uttered on diferent occasions. For instance, Sri Guru Nanak Dev had a dialogue with Siddhas at a number of places, viz., Gorakhmatta (later Nanakmatta), Sumér Parbat (Kailash mountain) and Achal Batala (as stated in detail by Bhai Gurdas). At Kartarpur, the Guru gave a shape to the different dialogues in the form of the long hymn entitled *Siddh-Gost,* which is preserved in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The Guru lived at Kartarpur for many years. His fame had spread far and wide, and he had, in fact, become a legend in his own lifetime. He attracted a constant stream of visitors and seekers of spiritual knowledge and comfort. His followers learnt as much from his discourses as from his practical example.

It was at Kartarpur that the Guru organised the *bani* revealed to him from time to time under different situations. His compositions are discussed in a separate chapter. The Gurmukhi script in which his *bani* was recorded, was developed by him at Kartarpur.

The Guru breathed his last on September 22, 1539 CE, after selecting Bhai Lehna as his successor through a rigorous test of faith and grasp of his philosophy. According to *Puratan Janamsakhi*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev handed over the manuscript of his verses to his successor before his demise.

The Guru loved and was loved by all. Both Hindus and Muslims owned him, so that, as the story goes, each wanted to perform his last rites according to their own faith.

— *K.S.*

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5. *Meharbanwali Janamsakhi*, MS., Khalsa College, Amritsar, p. 67.
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'ਨਾਨਕ ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਲਿ ਹਾਂ। ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਾਈਂ ਨਿਹਾਲੁ ਕੀਆ ਹੈ, ਅਰੁ ਜੋ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ ਲੇਵੈਗਾ ਸੋ ਸਭ ਮੈ ਨਿਹਾਲੁ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੈਨਿ। ਤੂ ਜਾਇ ਕਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ, ਅਰੁ ਲੋਕਾ ਥੀਂ ਭੀ ਜਪਾਇ। ਅਰੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਥੀਂ ਨਿਰਲੇਪੁ ਰਹੁ, ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ, ਸੇਵਾ, ਸਿਮਰਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਹੁ। ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਾਈਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੀਆ ਹੈ। ਤੂ ਏਹਾ ਕਿਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ'। ਤਬਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਲਾਮ ਕੀਤਾ, ਖੜਾ ਹੋਆ, ਤਬ ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲਿਆ, ਧੁਨਿ ਅਨਹਦੁ ਉਠੀ :

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

ਕੋਟਿ ਕੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਰਜਾ ਪਵਣੁ ਪੀਅਣੁ ਅਪਿਆਉ ॥ ਚੰਦੁ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਦੁਇ ਗੁਫੈ ਨ ਦੇਖਾ ਸੁਪਨੈ ਸਉਣ ਨ ਥਾਉ ॥ ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾ ਨਾਉ ॥੧॥ ਸਾਚਾ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਜ ਥਾਇ ॥ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਆਖਣੁ ਆਖਣਾ ਜੇ ਭਾਵੈ ਕਰੇ ਤਮਾਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕੁਸਾ ਕਟੀਆ ਵਾਰ ਵਾਰ ਪੀਸਣਿ ਪੀਸਾ ਪਾਇ। ਅਗੀ ਸੇਤੀ ਜਾਲੀਆ ਭਸਮ ਸੇਤੀ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਉ ॥ ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾ ਨਾਉ ॥੨॥ ਪੰਖੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਜੇ ਭਵਾ ਸੈ ਅਸਮਾਨੀ ਜਾਉ ॥ ਨਦਰੀ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਆਵਊ ਨਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪੀਆ ਨ ਖਾਉ ॥ ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾ ਨਾਉ ॥੩॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਗਦ ਲਖ ਮਣਾ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਕੀਚੈ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਮਸੂ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਲੇਖਣਿ ਪਉਣੁ ਚਲਾਉ ॥ ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾ ਨਾਉ ॥੪॥੨॥

ਤਬਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਅਵਾਜੁ ਹੋਆ, 'ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਨਦਰੀ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਕੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਕਰੁ। ਜੋ ਕਿਸੀ ਕਿਆ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਆ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਦਰਿ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਆ ਕਿਆ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਬਜੰਤ੍ਰ ਗਾਵਨ ਹਾਰੇਂ। ਤਬਿ ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਧੁਨਿ ਉਠੀ :

ਜਪੁ ਮ: ੧ ॥ ਸਲੋਕ ॥

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

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3

SRI GURU NANAK DEV
— WORKS AND TEACHINGS —

Introduction

Sri Guru Nanak Dev during his *Udasis* to various parts of India observed that spiritual hypocrisy, moral degeneration, empty ritualism, spiritless ceremonialism, and superstitious fears had badly gripped the psyche of the masses. To de-institutionalise the concept of *varna ashram* that had tainted the Indian society, Sri Guru Nanak Dev evolved the concept of *sangat*, a congregation of God-oriented people without distinction of creed and caste, wedded to the sacred *Naam*, and filled with humility that Sri Guru Nanak Dev hailed as man's greatest virtue. Sri Guru Nanak Dev established *sangats* wherever he went,[1] and in the later period, *sangat* and *pangat* became the cardinal pillars of the Sikh society. *Sangats* were the gatherings of the followers of Sri Guru Nanak Dev where everybody, shedding their ego and class / caste consciousness, sat equal to others to meditate on the Name of God. The idea of high and low, untouchability and class compartmentalization started melting away. To concretize this idea further, the institution of *pangat* and *langar* was also started, in which everybody was expected to eat before joining the *sangat*.

Sangat is an assembly of God-oriented men and women, where one learns to live in and for the society. Three aspects of *sangat* are worth mentioning. First, *sangat*, as says Sri Guru Nanak Dev, is the ocean of *Naam* through which Godhood is attained. Through the lessons learnt in *sangat*, the spiritual darkness disappears and the mind is illumined. Man gets enlightened in the company of pious persons, just as iron, when touched with the philosopher's stone, turns into gold.[2] Secondly, for such attainment man is not required to go to any jungle for quietude. Liberation, here and now, is possible while living in the world — is the cardinal principle of the Sikh Faith. *Bhairvi chakras*, in the name of spiritual elevation were already in vogue, and Sri Guru Nanak Dev must have seen them when he was in Assam. These *tantric* congregations were committed to dubious practices involving five m's — *maans* (meat), *machhli* (fish), *madya* (liquor), *maithuna* (sex) and *mudra* (mixed grain) — which only a few chosen persons were allowed to join. The *sangats* established by Sri Guru Nanak Dev were

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open to all irrespective of their caste, colour, and creed. Thirdly, from the psychological point of view in the loneliness of a jungle or a cave, one is easily liable to deviate from the right path, because no guide is there to check the evil temptations that may lead the mind astray. This is evident from numerous mythological stories of ascetics, living in the forests and observing penances, who were easily beguiled by the *apsaras* (nymphs) and the tribal women. If one stays in society, of which refined form is *sangat*, one is sure to elevate oneself through an automatic check over the propensities of the five senses that lead man into the mesh of desire. *Sangat* is a place where the energies of body and mind are used for the well-being of the needy by working in *langar* or rendering other services (*sewa*) to society. Moreover, in Sikhism, for spiritual elevation, the Gurus lay great emphasis on meditation on *Naam* and service to people, both of which are performed in *sangat*.

No doubt all the Gurus were beacon lights for the Sikhs, but the role of *sangats*, initially established by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, should not be underestimated. *Sangat*, by the times of Sri Guru Hargobind, had become fully conscious of the fact that without *shakti*, *bhagti* is incomplete, but the pretentious collusion of both for vested interests is dangerous for society. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, besides preaching the importance of compassion, humility, service, and altruism to his *sangats*, exhorted his followers to inculcate courage, spirit of sacrifice, love and self-respect.[3]

Nanak Bani

Nanak *bani* is the nucleus of the Sikh way of life. While discussing doctrines propounded by the first Master and elaborating the concept of *Sabad* as the Guru, we have tried to show, on the basis of the preface written by Bhai Vir Singh to *Gurmat Nirnay* (of Bhai Jodh Singh) as to how *bani* was revealed to Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Here it suffices to say that on different occasions of delight to behold the varied creation of the Creator as well as anguish on the plight of the centuries-long trampled people, the *bani* spontaneously flowed from the mouth of the great Guru. His *bani* infused the spirit of self-respect, dignity of labour, brotherhood of mankind, and fatherhood of One Supreme Lord. Its medium of communication was the *lingua franca* of the common folks, and its message was universal in content. It was revelatory and the expression of a profound spiritual experience. Based on sound ethical principles, it created a community of believers in one Lord, fearless and sublime which ultimately emerged as the Khalsa order. The traits of the Khalsa order of future are clearly perceptible in almost all the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, be they longer ones such as *Jap (ji)*, *Onkar*, *Siddh-Gost*, *Baramah Tukhari* or the short ones such as *Pahare*, *Thitien*, *Alahniyan* and many more included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The total number of hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib is 974, written in nineteen musical measures (*raags*). Some of the popular and prominent hymns by Sri Guru Nanak Dev are as follows :

Jap (ji)

Jap (ji) is the most aphoristic creation of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in which the

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whole theology, ethics, sociology, religion and philosophy of Sikhism are encapsulated in thirty-eight stanzas of varying lengths. Sometimes it is held that the *Jap (ji)* is the explication of the *Moolmantar*, the creedal statement, the rubric of the Sikh faith. It is also held that Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the explication of *Jap (ji)*. Unlike other hymns, since it is not placed under any *raag*, it may not be meant for singing but for serious reflection and meditation. Almost all the basic problems on the way to spiritual realisation have been touched upon in this hymn. In the very first stanza, the problem of how to become truthful, and how the wall of nescience, which the individual erects around himself, can be demolished, is discussed. And here itself, the efficacy of living according to the Divine Will (*Hukam*) is established by Sri Guru Nanak Dev. *Jap (ji)* is rich in content, for its stanzas not only sing the glories of the Wondrous Lord, but also expose spiritual hypocrisy, religious cant and false beliefs, which are hurdles on the way to the realm of bliss. Shunning blind devotion, this hymn gives a right perspective and a right direction. *Jap (ji)* clearly denotes how one can move in harmony with *Hukam*, and how one can demolish the wall of falsehood. The seeker is required to have firm faith in one Guru, God, and to abide by His laws and not by the vested interests of the so-called and self-appointed representatives of the Lord, who are running their shops in the name of religion. No idolatry is allowed, because according to *Jap (ji)* God can neither be created nor embodied in a stone.[4] Efficacy of listening, getting fully attuned to the praises of the wondrous Lord and to mould one's self in consonance with attributes of the Divine in one's life has been encapsulated in four stanzas each. Besides this, the ethico-spiritual definition of *dharam* is given and the seeker is exhorted to hold fast to the optimistic faith in the possibility of the realisation of the Divine. Labyrinths of physical yogic exercises are repudiated, and instead, the evil propensities of mind are urged to be sublimated and used for ethical dispensation of the world around. To concretise this thought further, five stages of spiritual realisation leading one to the realm of Truth have been discussed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev at the end of this long hymn.

2. SIDDH-GOST

Siddh-Gost is a dialogue with the *Siddhas* that enunciates Sri Guru Nanak Dev's concept of the Divine and has been hailed as the epitome of Sikh metaphysics.

A hymn of seventy-three stanzas (*pauris*), *Siddh-Gost* deals with *gurmat* vis-a-vis yogic praxis. The main theme is placed in the very beginning of the hymn that simply wandering hither and thither cannot make one's life pure and purposeful. No one without the true *Sabad* (Word) is emancipated. Realising *Sabad* in the world around and repudiating the sense of I-am-ness are the main props of the theology of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's liberated man in this hymn is a *gurmukh*, who has to be — more vibrant and responsible for helping in the upliftment of the downtrodden, more responsible and sensitive towards the destitutes, more alert and lively in regard to his surroundings and full of compassion for all sentient creatures. As says Sri Guru Nanak Dev, he had put on the garb of an Udasi (hermit) to travel far and wide in search of such *gurmukhs*. The main theme of this long hymn is the search for *gurmukhs*,

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whose internal and external virtues have been graphically described in sixteen stanzas from stanza twenty-seven onwards.

Siddh-Gost is a dialogue with the exponents of yoga, and only two names, Charpat and Loharipa, figure in the entire poem. In fact these two *Siddhas* were the main leaders of their respective sects of Jogis (Yogis). Charpat was an alchemist, whose sect was busy in the preparation of an elixir from mercury to enhance longevity of life. Loharipa was known by many names : Avilokiteshvar in Nepal, Lohitpad in Assam, and Machhandar Nath in Northern India. He had great impact upon people, and was instrumental in converting many a king and queen to the path of Jogis. In *Siddh-Gost*, the queries raised by the Jogis are of two types : first they ask some personal questions to which Sri Guru Nanak Dev does not seem to attach much importance, but when the Guru is asked to answer the philosophical queries about the origin of the universe, the nature and form of *Sabad*, Guru, *Sunn* as originating force and crossing the ocean of life, Sri Guru Nanak Dev answers them in detail and enlightens them. The *Siddhas* are so overwhelmed that earlier they had called the Guru a boy (*Bala-balak*), but later on started addressing him '*Avadhu* Nanak', '*Swami*' and '*Purakha*' as a mark of respect for his enlightened views on the concepts of yoga and Guru.

Siddh-Gost stresses the fact that to attain equipoise and emancipation, the true *Sabad* is the only help and that a *gurmukh* (God-oriented) understands this clearly. He delinks himself from self-conceit and remains detached, even in the midst of attachments. According to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, *gurmukh* is a true yogi. The entire yogic terminology such as *shabad* (*sabad*), *shunya* (*sunn*), *Nama* (*Naam*), *mudra*, *mahasukh*, etc., used in the *Siddh-Gost* is interpreted from the *gurmat* point of view. It is *Siddh-Gost* which may be considered as the best example of the spirit of dialogue with those who profess a different line of thought from one's own.

3. ASA DI VAR

Asa di Var consists of twenty-four *pauris* and fifty-nine *sloks* (couplets). The *sloks*, forty-four by Sri Guru Nanak Dev and fifteen by Sri Guru Angad Dev, varying in number, precede each *pauri* by Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Social order is the main theme of this *bani*, besides the invocation in praise of the Guru. This *var* alludes to the Hindu social as well as scholastic orders prevalent in the medieval period.[5] Aghoris, Jains, Jogis and their sub-sects as well as their ways to God have been defined.[6] The hybrid society of Hindus, who had been serving the erstwhile Muslim rulers and were suffering from the guilt of being half-Muslim and half-Hindu, has been graphically brought out. However, a major part of this hymn is devoted to the hypocrisies of the decadent Indian social order where the individual psyche was ever in the grip of the fear of endless concatenation of births and deaths. Sri Guru Nanak Dev candidly castigates such people and conceives an ideal social order for mankind. He expresses in this hymn that society, instead of consisting of recluses, who consider the world as unreal (*mithya*), should consist of God-oriented people, who accept the world as true or real, being the creation of the True Lord. Sri Guru Nanak Dev accepts this world as transitory, but not unreal. Sikhism exhorts the people to make maximum use of

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this transitional period for self-improvement and for public weal. *Asa di Var* inspires masses to shun dogmatism, ritualism, casteism, and gender discrimination, which were the bane of Indian society. In the last stanzas of this hymn, the Guru asks people to have mutual love and regard, which is not based on selfish considerations, because such relationship can never last long.

4. ONKAR

This hymn of fifty-four stanzas is recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib .[7] The concept of a truly learned scholar is defined. Here we find Sri Guru Nanak Dev questioning the *pandit* on his ontological point of view. Transitory nature of the world is explained and humility is applauded. Sri Guru Nanak Dev asks the learned scholar to understand the nature and powers of *Onkar*, which is the essence of the three worlds. The *pandit* should not confuse the people by putting before them the worldly puzzles. The Guru further says that everyone is content to say that God is One, but in actions we are engrossed in ego and pride that keep us away from Him. It is a great irony that, in spite of knowing that 'as borax melts gold, so lust and wrath waste the body away', and that 'gold is rubbed over the touchstone and gold endures fire', we still act contrary to this knowledge and consequently suffer.

In this work, the *pandit* (*panda*) stands for the learned class, which is in mad pursuit of wealth and cares little about its responsibility to moral regeneration and spiritual guidance of the masses. As *Asa di Var* embodies the criticism of the vain and the hypocritical social orders and *Siddh-Gost* is a gist of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's metaphysics with the Jogis during his travels, in the same way the hymn *Onkar* is a summary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's discourses with the intelligentsia.

The Precepts

In order to better understand the worldview propagated by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, we need to understand the metaphysical precepts which he propounded.

THE SUPREME REALITY

In Sri Guru Nanak Dev's *bani* the concept of the Supreme Reality is not only dynamic and reverberating, but many logical contradictions regarding *nirgun-sargun*, immanent-transcendent, creator-preserver-destroyer, etc., are congealed into the unicity of Godhead. Sri Guru Nanak Dev makes it clear : Unity becomes plurality and plurality eventually becomes unity.[8] Sri Guru Gobind Singh expresses the same idea.[9] Sri Guru Nanak Dev never tried to prove the existence of God, the Supreme Reality; because being imbued with the Divine Love, he could never imagine that there could be any doubt about His existence. The self is the Supreme Reality for the Guru which, when enlarged and magnified and freed from the clutches of evil propensities, becomes God itself. That Supreme Reality which, according to Sikhism, is unknowable, infinite, unapproachable, not subject to death and destiny, has been accepted as *Nirgun Brahman*, and is of the nature of pure bliss identical to the self. The last reality of this physical world being matter, required to be revealed by the

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spirit, is not, therefore, the sole reality, which, when taken in its entirety has to be viewed in relation to the spirit, and thus conception of *Sargun Brahman* is brought forth. *Nirgun Brahman* is the central concern of the soul of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, but the Sikhs are not passive *nirgunvadin* ascetics having the idea of nothing to do with the turmoils and strife of this corporeal world. In such circumstances, the *nirgun* of the Guru becomes *sargun*, essentially having the same light and force in it. Sri Guru Nanak Dev invoked such *Sargun Brahman* when he witnessed the people being subjugated by the tyranny of the invaders.[10] One finds that the main focus of the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev is on *Nirgun Brahman* which essentially should not be considered without any quality, rather *Nirgun Brahman* may be accepted as above all qualities, though many qualities have been attributed to Him by the Guru in moments of intense feeling of devotion. In Sikhism, the concept of Supreme Reality has not been conceived as a matter of intellectual debate, rather the Supreme Force is to be realised through devotion, surrender and deep faith. Sri Guru Nanak Dev believes that the Supreme Power, which is always omnipotent, cannot gain any feather in its cap, if it is delineated as a corollary of *Sargun Brahman*, in the anthropomorphic sense and the killer of demons like Ravana and Kansa.[11] Sikhism categorically rejects the belief in the incarnation of the Divine. Hence, idol and image worship are forbidden. Nowhere in the hymns of the Guru does one find God described as an object of sense perception. The *sargun* aspect is a reflection of divine immanence of the Supreme, present in His creation, grace and love; not in idols or man-made images.

The most terse theological statement which tells about Sri Guru Nanak Dev's concept of Supreme Reality and with which Sri Guru Granth Sahib opens, is the *Moolmantar* which begins with numeral one (1) thereby meaning the Unicity of God, who may be known as *Onkar*, *Satnaam*, *Karta Purkh*, etc.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev's cosmopolitan vision is quite evident from his attempt to collect the sacred *banis* of the mystics of the Indian subcontinent, belonging to all strata of society. The idea of 'unity in diversity' and 'diversity in unity' is manifest in the different names attributed to the Supreme Lord. He uses *Ram*, *Khuda*, *Allah* and *Parbrahm* with the same devotion and delight. However, this does not mean that Sri Guru Nanak Dev was trying to syncretize different ideologies. He brought into operation the eclectic process, asked the people to cast off old and otiose thoughts that engulfed their minds and kept them away from Truth. Sikhism is an expression of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's revelation of the '੧' (One), and afterwards the denunciation of all notions and institutionalized practices which had little relevance to the moral and spiritual regeneration. What he sought was the One Essence, the Supreme Reality, of the universe, and the essence remains the same, be it *Onkar* or *Khuda*. In the philosophy of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the Supreme Reality has been made known also as *Naam* — the Essence of the Universe; *Sabad* — the primordial sound from which the whole of cosmos has emanated; *Sunn* — the intrinsic nature of all the materials of the world; and *Hukam* — the Divine imperative, inherent in and transcendent of creation.

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WORLD CREATION

There exists a whole treatise by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *Raag Maru* that systematically discusses the origin and nature of the universe to explain all aspects of which we would need a separate book. Also, references here and there in Sri Guru Granth Sahib further clarify the Sikh view of ontological existence. The Gurus were mystics, and a mystic rises above earthly reason, and the mystical experience has a vaguely noetic quality. Moreover, the Gurus were poets, and a poet touches upon a truth, leaving it for the reader to fathom it fully. Sri Guru Nanak Dev says :

> All the endless expanse of creation arose out of one Note,
> giving rise to millions of streams.[12]
> For millions upon millions, countless years was spread darkness,
> when existed neither earth nor heaven, but only the limitless Divine Ordinance.[13]

In *Jap (ji)*, the Guru writes that the world was not created in parts but as a whole.[14] Reality and transitoriness of the world have been emphasised and sometimes juxtaposed in the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. We see in *Asa di Var* two quite different sounding statements about this world :

> True and real are Thy continents and universes.[15]
> Evanescent is show of kingship, evanescent the subjects.[16]

This world is also likened to the cloud of smoke[17] and since it is in flux who could be a friend here.[18] So one finds that this world may be considered as a dialectic between its being real and its being transitory. It is real, for it is the creation of the Ultimate One, Who, as says the Guru, is Truth in and beyond all the times; it is false when it is oblivious of the One intrinsic core of essence of the cosmos. Its dialectic is accomplished only when setting aside *haumain* (ego), the relation of the created and the Creator is recognised and accepted. This synthesis, latent in Sri Guru Granth Sahib renders an overall positive and realistic view of the world, and does not regard it as illusion or *maya* as in Buddhism and Vedanta. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is stressing the staunch acceptance of the systolic and diastolic flow of the One. In the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, this creation has been deemed as the sport of the One God who happily sits amidst His own creation and beholds its activities. Sri Guru Nanak Dev brings out the role of *haumain* (*ahankar* — ego) in the internal and external process of creation. In *Siddh-Gost* it is clearly stated that the world emanates out of *haumain* and suffers innumerable tortures on account of forsaking the *Naam*.[19] In the *Vedanta*, the *Sankhya*, and the *Gita*, ego is supposed to be evaluated from *parkirti*, but Sri Guru Nanak Dev accepts *parkirti* as emanating from *haumain*; and this is a radical departure from the traditional Indian religious thought. Dr Sher Singh states :

> In *haumain*, various combinations of the three *gunas* (qualities) begin to form the world in infinite ways, and construction and destruction go on, but the Ultimate Reality remains unaffected, and God as such is transcendent and above all these changes.[20]

Apart from *haumain*, for the purpose of cosmological process, *Sabad* and *Sunn* have also been used by Sri Guru Nanak Dev for identical purposes, though creation out of *Sunn* in the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev does not mean creation out of non-

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being or void. Unlike Buddhism, this *Sunn* (*Shunya* in Buddhism) is a positive concept here. *Sunn* implies that state in the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in which before creation all the elemental forces were centred in the Supreme element, *Parmatma*. That Supreme element has been called *Onkar* (the Primordial Word — *Sabad*) by Sri Guru Nanak Dev. In his hymn titled *Onkar*, the whole of creation has been accepted as emanating from *Onkar*. Day, night, gods, demi-gods, scriptures, the mountains, are all born out of *Onkar*.

> From the Supreme Being, Sole and Unique got Brahma his existence.
> Who in mind bore the Supreme Being, Sole and Unique.
> From the Supreme Being, Sole and Unique, took birth mountains and *yugas*.[21]

Modern physics has explained matter as a form of energy which changes its form in different environments. According to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, everything, including the subtle energy, was created under *hukam* of the Supreme Being, or Absolute Truth. First was created air, from air came water, and all the other cosmological forces ensued. The Guru says :

> From the almighty Creator has come air, from air water;
> With water are the three worlds created,
> And Divine Light in all beings pervasive.[22]

This fact is further stressed by saying : "The air is the Guru, water the father, and earth the great mother."[23]

JIVA

According to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, under the Will of God *jiva* (being) takes birth and dies, thus shedding the elemental body :

> Birth and death by Divine Ordinance occur;
> By the Divine Will beings come and go.[24]

Though symbolically, Yama and his noose have been referred to in the hymns of the Gurus, but no god or goddess in the anthropomorphic sense is conceived as in charge of birth and death. All this materialises, according to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, under the law of God's Will :

> By Divine Ordinance are beings created;
> By Divine Ordinance are some exalted.[25]

Hukam is not a blind impulse of the Supreme Being but the ultimate law. The law for birth of man, the Guru says, is the law of *karma* :

> By one's actions is acquired the vesture of human incarnation.[26]

Human body made of matter has only the quality of being and not of knowing. Contrary to the matter alone, the *jiva*, being the subject of all the experiences and hence having the qualities of both being and knowing, cannot be called *jiva* merely due to its having the elemental body made of matter. *Jiva*, being a constituent of spirit and matter, the spirit or soul in it is the support and essence of life on which stands the superstructure of body. Sri Guru Nanak Dev came across Jogis at many places, and the Sikh religious tradition on the basis of traditional accounts and Sri Guru Granth

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Sahib , holds that meetings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev with the Jogis took place at four main places, namely, Gorakhhatri (Peshawar), Achal Batala (Punjab), Gorakhmata now known as Nanakmatta (near Pilibhit in U.P.), and in the Sumér mountains. Discussions with Sumér mountain Jogis are recorded in the *Siddh-Gost* by Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[27] *Kaya-sadhna*, or culture of the body, was the general characteristic of the religious practices prevalent in ancient India, and Nath-Siddhas were no exception. To free the body of impurities, the Jogis, particularly *hathyogis*, would undertake austerities that would tantamount to a sort of crucifixion of the body. Six practices, i.e., *khat karmas* consisting of *dhauti*, *neti*, *vasti*, *neoli*, *tratak* and *kapalbhati* were ascetical practices to mortify the flesh. Then the arousal of the *kundalini* and piercing of the six *chakras* involved considerable pain, physical disorders and even diseases.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev sees the body as a storehouse of a jeweller, whose capital is unrivalled *Naam*. The merchant who deals in the contemplation of *Sabad* secures this merchandise :

> Brother ! this self is the jeweller's shop,
> The wares in this is the Name illimitable.
> Brother, such alone of the merchants grasp such wares,
> As contemplate the Master's Word.[28]
> This body is a shop, the mind-therein the trader —
> Spontaneously therein carrying on commerce of truth.[29]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev declares that that body alone is pure, that is filled with *Naam*. The mortal whose mind is filled in awe of the True One attains grace that drives away 'the heat of sin'.[30] In fact, in contradistinction to the Jogis, the body is regarded by Sri Guru Nanak Dev as a potent vehicle of *Naam-Sabad*, but it cannot be made immortal with the help of different *bandhas* (yogic-exercises); rather *Sunn* (*Brahm*) is to be made the biggest *bandh* against the perishable body. Surely *Sunn bandh* will save the *prana* and the body ultimately :

> Should the self in the unattributed Absolute be constantly fixed,
> The swan of life flies not off, nor does the wall of the body collapse.[31]

The body at its farther end becomes mind, which though an evolute and therefore phenomenal, further merges into soul (spirit) which is the essence of body and mind as alluded to above. That is why Sri Guru Amar Das, the third Nanak, says : "My self ! in aspect you are image of the Divine Light. Realise, your own exalted origin."[32]

Though God and the individual soul apparently look different yet in essence are the same. The simile of ocean and waves is generally used by Sri Guru Nanak Dev and other Gurus to indicate the relation between God and the individual. Though *jiva* is a part of God, it has not the fullness of God and, therefore, cannot be as omniscient as He is. Sri Guru Nanak Dev says :

> O God, You are perfect and I am imperfect and paltry.
> You are profound and I am but trifling.[33]
> The self neither dies nor by itself sinks or swims :
> All happens as the Creator ordains.[34]

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By Divine Ordinance are beings marked with nobility or ignominy;
By the Ordinance are they visited with bliss or bale.[35]

If *jiva* and the Supreme Reality are one, then how has the personal problem of *jiva*, of its seeing itself as different or other than the Reality, been solved by Sri Guru Nanak Dev ? The Guru stresses the fact that cultivated egoism (*haumain*), subjectively known as *avidya* — ignorance, and objectively considered *maya*, goes at the base of the individual self and makes it feel different from the Supreme Lord. Under the impact of the inner ego, which Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *Asa di Var*[36] calls the chronic disease (*diragh rog*), the individual self becomes the victim of evil propensities. All birth and death, giving and taking, earning and spending, becoming true or false, becoming dirty or clean, are caused by *haumain*.[37] This *haumain* makes possible the continuity of the individual self in the series of births and deaths. The understanding developed through the meritorious actions makes *jiva* realise that he is subject to *haumain* (ego), which requires effacement to attain wisdom.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Origin of the universe, the nature of reality, the soul and its relation to the body are some of the obstinate questions that baffle human mind. Philosophers, theologians, scientists and saints have attempted in their own way to find a key to these riddles. As *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* points out that the answers to these enigmas are not only many but contradictory, having different teleological dimensions. The epistemology critically endeavours to ascertain why and how these contradictory views have emerged and whether they show the limits of the human mind or an unwarranted application of cognitive processes to matters beyond its ken. However, epistemology may not be treated as a mere mental exercise for the abstract, which is the domain of pure philosophy and which may only be one aspect of knowing. Epistemology put forth by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, having its roots in his spiritual experience, includes in it not only knowledge but a will and feeling for proper implementation of that knowledge in order to meet the hard realities of life.

Traditional Indian thought accepts perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony as the four sources of valid knowledge. Sankaracharya repeatedly asserts that it is the knowledge alone which, by destroying ignorance, the root-cause of this "unreal" world, can enable us to be one with the Absolute. About the combining of knowledge with action, Sankara says that 'knowledge and action are opposed like light and darkness'. They are contradictory and are poles apart. In his *Shariraka-Bhashya*, he further holds that 'the opposition of knowledge and action stands firm like a mountain'. Sikhism, being a non-monastical and life-affirming religion has its own postulates and doctrines which have something altogether new in theory and practice. In Sikh epistemology, besides the above mentioned four sources of valid knowledge, Sri Guru Nanak Dev puts forth three altogether new sources of valid knowledge which are very much rooted in action and the sense of responsibility towards individual as well as social life.

The first valid source of knowledge enunciated by the Guru is *vismad* (wonder /

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awe), which according to Otto is the core of religious experience that creates a fascinating phenomenon. To be knowledgeable in Sikhism, one is required to fill the heart with the innocence of a child who is full of wonder and awe, when one happens to be face to face with the expansive world and its varied traditions, social as well as religious. We find Sri Guru Nanak Dev in such a state in *Jap (ji)*, the opening hymn of Sri Guru Granth Sahib , when in stanza twenty-seven he goes on asking about the gate to the mansion of the Lord, the countless melodies and measures, the Indras, the Jogis, the men of continence, charity, poise and the indomitable heroes. Like an awe-struck person, he does not stop for the answer but goes on to further ask about the men of learning, mighty seers and almost everything in the cosmos around. It is indeed an expression of cosmic consciousness which finds expression again in the thirty-fifth stanza, when he is entranced by trying to count the innumerable forms of air, water, fire, Krishnas, Shivas, Brahmas, fashioning universes of various forms, hues and aspects. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's inquiries about the suns and moons, the continents and lands, the accomplished Jogis, the enlightened ones, the incarnations of the goddesses, the demons, the ascetics, the forms of speech and the lineage of the kings are endless.

In the state of *vismad* alluded to above, the cultivated and inflated ego loses its hold on the mind. The knowledge of the limitations and incapacities of self dawns upon the individual and *haumain*, and its subsequent manifestations, diminish. The sensible man turns out to be humble and full of cohesiveness to happily accept the existential position and importance of others. Knowledge emerged through *vismad* puts aside the inclination of putting somebody else to harm. According to Sikhism one is truly knowledgeable (*giani*), who neither is afraid of anybody nor makes others afraid of him.[38]

Love is the second valid source of knowledge in Sikhism. The importance given to love in the Sikh scripture is immense, and love has been considered as the *elan vital* of the society. Such a consideration in the Indian milieu is possible only in Sikhism, because it is in it alone that man has been accepted as man in the full sense of the term. In fact, where man has been classified in four categories for the convenience of the higher strata of society, how could love operate there ? First rate and second rate citizens were always heard of, but the existence of third and fourth rate people was found only in the Indian society. To talk of love in such a society was not only impossible but ludicrous too. That is why the growth of the society in this part of the world was lopsided before the advent of Sikhism. Love being the best incentive to virtue, the virtuous life based on love was always impossible in India. However, most of the Greek philosophers accept love as the early combining force working through different elements which are the cause of this creation of the cosmos. Antagonism distracts them away from each other as, barring few exceptions, had been the case of the Indian society in the medieval period. Distraction of elements is commonly known as the dissolution and their being together is known as creation. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, in his *Jap (ji)*, terms this process as *vijog* and *sanjog*.[39]

Man being creation of the five elemental creative forces, love is his basic

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ingredient. That is why much emphasis has been laid upon love and love-based *halemi raj* (benign state) in Sikhism. Indeed, there may be scores of laws to make life happy but the implementation of all the laws in one short-spanned life is impossible. Love is the *summum bonum* of all the laws which subsumes in it all the temporal and spiritual imperatives. Stealing, hatred, anger, lust, become alien to the loving person. Greed and love, as is explained in Sri Guru Granth Sahib , cannot exist together because their basic natures are poles apart. Greed amasses, whereas love distributes everything *gratis*, says Baba Farid in Sri Guru Granth Sahib :

> O Farid, love and greed do not go together.
> With greed love is rendered impure.
> Such a love is frail as a leaking straw roof against rain.[40]

This is the reason that love, far from being an amorous propensity, is a challenge in the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. He says :

> Should you seek to engage in the game of love,
> Step into my street (the way of life) with your head placed on your palm.
> Once one steps on this path, one does not even think
> before sacrificing one's head (everything).[41]

Sikhism leads man to God through love for one and all. Unfortunately, man, at the apex of creation, has started considering himself the master of everything on this planet. And his sense of mastery has enhanced his ego to such an extent that he does not hesitate to snap his ties of love, respect, and regard for others. The catastrophic results are obvious. Institutions such as family and marriage are falling apart; concrete wilderness, ecological imbalance and mechanisation of life have made him a mere cog in the wheel. Bereft of love he is becoming alien to himself. He suffers from a sense of isolation and loss of identity. Sikhism, by means of *sangat*, brings him back to the fold so that he may rediscover his identity.

A *gurmukh*, the ideal individual conceived by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, bases his living on the *kirat karna* (to labour honestly), *Naam japna* (to remember Him always), and *vand chhakna* (to share with others whatever one has). *Naam* being central, its two wings are *kirat karna* and *vand chhakna* which are based on love for others. Selfless love stops the individual from being exploitative and cruel. Engaged in *sewa* (selfless service of humanity) he loses his egoism.

Sabad, another valid source of knowledge, has been equated with the Guru — the fount of all knowledge. All Sikh Gurus accepted *Sabad* as the Guru vis-a-vis the institution of physical personal gurus prevalent from time immemorial in India. *Sabad*, the Word, is the essence of all the worlds and the creatures[42] and through this inner essence surrounded by the physical bodyframe, Lord, the supreme essence diffused in the cosmos, is realised.

> May egoism and acquisitiveness be burnt; Burnt be greed and pride,
> Saith Nanak : By contemplation of the holy Word is obtained the treasure of merit.[43]

Sri Guru Amar Das also testifies to the above by saying that without understanding and realisation of the powers and myriad faculties of *Sabad*, the world is but darkness.

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Only *Sabad* reveals the intricacies of the creation and the Creator.[44] More details about the exact location of the concentrated *Sabad*, its permutations and combinations in the body are given in the *Siddh-Gost*. Here it suffices to say that the *Sabad* is the most valid source of knowledge and it is not merely passively revealed word (*apta vachana*) of the seers. It is, according to Sikhism, operative in and around all creatures, who, according to their station, have different levels of revelation of the mystery of the world and the Lord. Epistemologically, therefore, Sri Guru Nanak Dev has his own standpoint, and the knowledge, and also the sources of knowledge in his hymns, are deeply correlated with the social and the spiritual life around.

Doctrines

SACH AND SAT

Sach, which is the operative form of *sat* (ਸਤਿ), literally truth, and as preached by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, denoted ever-existent consciousness, the ultimate reality, the immutable nature of the omnipotent God and the subtlest basic element of creation, that has always remained an integral value and powerful force in day-to-day Sikh life. Scriptural texts propound *sat* as 'eternality', 'continuity', and 'unicity'. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's varied and wide use of the cognates of *sat*, e.g., *satsangat*, *satgur*, *satnaam*, *sachkhand*, *sachiar*, etc., establish its predominant role in Sikh ethical and spiritual life.

The first and the most appropriate attribute of the One Absolute is *sat* in the *Moolmantar*. All other names of God are based on his various actions, which limit His omnipotence. Names based on actions (*kirtam* names) delineate but one aspect of His phenomenal activity, whereas *sat* represents Him in His wholeness and complete grandeur, covering all the denominations of time and yet not getting fully exhausted by it. Says Sri Guru Nanak Dev :

> He was a reality in primal Time, in all Time.
> He is real at this moment,
> And He shall be real in all the moments to come.[45]

Since *sat* is immutable and beyond time and space, life and death, it never gets old or worn out.[46] According to Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *Asa di Var*,[47] the universe, which is transitory, is unreal in the context of *sat*, i.e., real and ever existent, but it is not antithetically unreal in the Vedantic sense of appearance and illusion. Changing, however, is not unreal because this universe, according to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, is the creation of the Supreme Being whose joy is in being present in it.[48] This joy of sitting amidst creation is meaningless if this creation is a mere illusion. In *Sukhmani*, Guru Arjun Dev also affirms :

> He is truth and His creation is true. From that Supreme have emanated all.[49]
> He is true. His truth is all-pervading but this truth is identified rarely by anyone.[50]

Sat is rather the ultimate cause behind the creation. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib , Sri Guru Nanak Dev stresses that the creation of the three worlds is supposed to have emanated from water which has come into existence due to gases, whose primordial cause is Truth, the Supreme *Sach* :

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From the Creator has come air, from air water; with water are the three worlds created,
and Divine Light in all beings pervasive.[51]

Three prominent dimensions of *sat* have been taken into consideration in Sikhism. Firstly, the truth is a direct irresistible force which illumines as well as blossoms the *jiva* as spontaneously as the lotus opens its petals with the feel of sunlight. Truth opens the inner eyes of higher consciousness which makes one feel the direct touch of the Supreme Truth — God. Man feels pointedly :

Above the *Vedas* and *Quran* and the whole world,
Is the Divine King — manifest to sight.[52]

Secondly, when man gets identified with the Truth, he goes beyond the illusions of transmigration. Now the *atma* sharply realises its own separate identity from the body and hence remains a mere witness of the actions of the latter, thus getting totally free from the clutches of the so-called philosophical and ritualistical endeavours. Then death and decay of body become meaningless and a dialectical relationship of truth and freedom emerges. This freedom cultivated by intellect and soul pushes the body to act for the dictum propounded by Sri Guru Nanak Dev : "If one loses honour in life, impure is all that one eats."[53] This dimension of *sat* begets sacrifice which is the backbone of Sikh way of life.

The third aspect of the *sat* is *Hukam* which as such is an interlink between the two dimensions alluded to above. *Hukam* in the form of outer penal codes is quite explicit, but its inner force and nature, apart from regulating the external activities of the entities, impart them their intrinsic essence. The coldness of water and the burning power of fire are not superficially imposed qualities, but are their essential internal nature, and hence implicit *Hukam*. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, while posing the problem of how to become truthful in the first stanza of *Jap (ji)*, asks *jiva* to listen to and follow this inner voice in the form of *Hukam* which has been perennially an integral part of *jiva*. When the alloy of such a truth in all its dimensions is allowed to take shape of the truthful sceptre, the creation through the same becomes wondrous and awe-inspiring. Says Sri Guru Nanak Dev : "The creation of the sceptre of truth made by the steel of truth is incomparable, beauteous, and infinite."[54]

Sach being basic to the creation, morality, and spirituality, Sri Guru Nanak Dev expects the *jiva* to become *sachiar*, i.e., truth-oriented. This seems to be the biggest concern of the Sikh Gurus, for, we find in the very beginning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib the question -- How to become *sachiar* ? Towards the conclusion of his *Jap (ji)* he explains *sach-khand* — the abode of truth. His preponderate and pithy propositions regarding Guru, *Hukam, gurmukh*, etc., link the *jiva* with the society and the world, because in Sikhism man is required to pursue the answer to this question through his truthful, meritorious, and altruistic actions here in this very world. In the context of *sach*, one finds Sikhism deeply concerned and involved in activity, and not in the spirit of repudiation of actions, which is a corollary of the perusal when one simply goes on probing into the problem what *Brahman* is. In Indian philosophical thought *Brahman*, is above *sat*, *asat*, *paap* and *punn*, but by linking *sat* with *Naam* (*roop*), Sri Guru Nanak

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Dev has made it a repository of all the ethical and spiritual values.

The truth-oriented person, *sachiar*, is defined by Sri Guru Nanak Dev as the being free of superstitious beliefs that are cherished by the general populace misled by bat-eyed priests. The sixteenth stanza of *Jap (ji)* states that the *sachiar* understands the mystery that it is not the mythic bull but *dharam* (begotten of compassion and content), which supports and sustains the whole humanity on earth. However, the essence of *sach* or reality in all its aspects is the life-pulse throbbing in the objects of the universe, though the thrust of this life-force in the so-called "less evolved" ones is not clearly perceptible. Those contemplating the self to the Supreme Self are attuned.[55]

According to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, one of the preconditions for knowing *sach* is the purity of heart achieved after purging it of falsehood.[56] Secondly, a genuine leaning towards truth and hence truthful life enraptured in *Naam* is essential. Thirdly, the *jugat*, i.e., the righteous way for temporal as well as spiritual life enunciated in *gurmat* is desired to be known by the seeker of *sach*. This *jugat* is the culture to master the five senses and to employ them to attain truth. Fourthly, he is also known to be one with truth, and is not repulsed by the true imperatives for being full of compassion and sacrifices. Fifth, he is face to face with truth and does not remain content only with the horizontal growth of personality but also is equally engaged in his vertical growth through the instructions of Guru by delving deep into his own innerself. Such all-dimensional truth is the panacea for all spiritual maladies of man to evolve a balanced personality devoid of any sort of prejudice and debasement. Says Sri Guru Amar Das : This Truth is the Lord of all and is found by those whom He graces.[57]

TRUTH REALISATION

In *Jap (ji)* while contemplating the Truth or the abode of Truth, Sri Guru Nanak Dev delves deep into its ethico-philosophical dimensions. The problem of how to become and make people truthful (*sachiar*) seems to be the prime concern of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, as is evident from almost all his hymns. In the concluding stanzas of *Jap (ji)* the ways and methods of realisation of the Supreme Truth have been graphically enunciated by the first Master.[58] The logic behind such an endeavour is that while probing into the truth, ultimately man feels transformed into a self-respecting and conscientiously awakened person.

An all-encompassing understanding of the circumambient reality and a sense of responsibility towards society coupled with righteous action, introduce the neophyte to a realm of joy. The world should be firmly accepted as an inn (*dharamsal*) to practise *dharam*, or noble deeds, for spiritual realisation. Those who take it as the real and final goal, remain away from Truth. Translated into simple prose, the full stanza of *Jap (ji)* reads as follows:

> He made day and night. He made the seasons, the winds and fires and the nether regions. In the midst of these earth is put up as *dharamsal*, the place of duty. The earth keeps with it diverse species of life; their names are infinite. As we act here so shall we be judged. The Lord is Truth and His court is also truthful. Seated there are the meritorious elects of God who through His glance are marked with His approval. Only there, false and

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true come to be known. One understands this mystery only on entering into this domain.[59]

Reading between the lines one finds Sri Guru Nanak Dev urging the *sadhaks* to consider their fellow beings as fellow pilgrims and start their *sadhana* from this very inn-earth, the *dharamsal.* A person engaged in this *sadhana* first of all becomes conscious and worried about his degeneration cultivated through the self-imposed indifference towards his duties and by shirking his moral responsibilities towards others. One has to imbibe that this world is nothing but an inn and while staying here one happens to meet many *jivas* in the form of mother, father, sister, wife, friends, etc. While discharging duties towards them honestly, attachment should never be cultivated with these worldly entities. The journey has to be continued by leaving all these relations and their implications behind to attain the final truth. On the other hand, the holy scripture or the Guru imparts one some sort of strength, but still that strength has to be used by one's own self since there is no ready-made way available. By saying that this earth sustains diverse species of life, Sri Guru Nanak Dev points towards the scientific fact that no creature is similar to the other either in form or in nature. Every human being is a unique and wonderful piece of work which stands second to none. On the basis of the above, it can be safely held that when the gross bodies show a lot of difference when compared to others, no individual could be similar to others in his needs, wants and accomplishments. It is quite natural also because the human being is not a machine whose components can be easily made interchangeable. Obviously, every human being conforming generally to the broader thought frame of his fellow beings must have a different way of living not impinging upon the religious and social freedom of others. Hence, every *jiva* has to search and make his own way for the realisation of the Supreme Truth. This can be further confirmed on the basis of the fact that God is said to be the Creator and not the manufacturer of the universe. Creation is always new. It can never be the copy of the earlier models whereas in manufacturing or production of a machine, the truth is otherwise. Hence, the first step towards Truth Realisation is the cognizance of this reality that the earth merely is a *dharamsal* where we are strangers to each other as the persons living in a hotel or inn. This further makes us polite and courteous to others, because in our daily life we generally overlook a mistake committed by a stranger, but do not forget mistakes committed by near and dear ones with whom we are attached. Thus, in order to leave this *kam*, *krodh*, *ahankar* one has to cultivate a feeling of aloofness or non-attachment which is definitely helpful for the development of personality.

This stanza brings forth another truth. The inexorable Law of Actions operates without fail. As we do here so shall we be judged. It is known to us that by our daily actions we keep on producing *sanskars* and these in turn are responsible for our further actions. Our further actions again produce the *sanskars* and involve us in the same type of actions in the future. For example, one who becomes angry or greedy once and cultivates attachment with that anger or greed, will certainly have more chances of becoming angry and greedy in future also. Sri Guru Nanak Dev feels that these *sanskars* ultimately make our actions a sort of habit, and consequently one becomes

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habitual or addicted to some particular way of acting. Only when we become aware of the fact that these habits are of our own cultivation, do we feel pity for ourselves. Our habits and *sanskars* are like alcohol to which we become addicted. The realisation that our *karmas* are solely responsible for our tensions, miseries and hardships, will make us aware of the fact that due to the influence of the *sanskars* all the persons around us, including our own self, have been considering this transitory *dharamsal* as the real home and struggling for attainment of worldly pleasures with the help of all sorts of deceptions in life. This realisation develops in us a feeling of tolerance, even when we are provoked by others, and our heart becomes imbued with *karuna* — pity for others.

The thirty-fifth stanza of *Jap (ji)* reads as follows :

Yea here to *Dharam* men confine,
Pray now the domain of *gian* define.
Many the elements of water, air, fire,
Many the Shivas, Krishnas, (Him admire),
Many the Brahmas who create the beings,
Of various forms, colours, kinds,
Many the fields of action,
Many the Mountains of gold,
Many the *Dhruvas* receiving instructions (at His threshold)
Many the Indras, Suns, Moons,
Many the stellars, many the earthly regions,
Many the Siddhas, Buddhas, Naths,
Many the gods, demons, sages,
Many the jewels born of oceans,
Many the norms of life,
Many the forms of speech,
Many the devotees of spirit, many the king of kings,
Many, O many, are the forms of beings.[60]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev in this stanza hints about the second stage of spiritual development leading towards Truth. Cherishing the sense of responsibility on the basis of the understanding of *dharam*, the seeker further learns that there are many kinds of life-originating forces and hence different kinds of climates and regions, which our limited knowledge (information) is unable to conceive and perceive. One should not feel that our earth is the only one in the cosmos, rather as the present-day science has proved, there are numerous solar systems and hence countless earths and other such planets. It is not possible for one to count the number of regions, mountains, rivers and the so-called creators like Brahma. This earth is like a spot in the context of the vastness of the creation on the vast panorama of the universe. Hence, it is easy to imagine what may be the possible position and potentialities of a human being living on this earth. Human being is smaller than an ant in comparison to the expanse of the world.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev is not trying to answer the questions put up by him as to

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how many airs, waters, fires, Brahmas, Shivas are there ? He simply delineates his curiosity like an innocent child and his heart is full of wonder and awe over the variety and limitlessness of creation. Likewise, he makes us realise that in this stage which creates and enhances ego, one should realise that empirical knowledge in fact is information and not wisdom. Higher knowledge or *para vidya* which makes one merge into the Supreme and Immutable is somewhat different. By knowledge, Sri Guru Nanak Dev means that higher knowledge which creates the sense of wonder and awe and about which Sri Guru Arjun the fifth Nanak says : "My thirst is not quenched with the help of these worldly eyes (the empirical knowledge) and those eyes are quite different with which I see the beloved One."[61]

Therefore, having reached this stage, the seeker should eschew the sense of pride in bookish knowledge and should develop in him a sense of awe (*vismad*) by sharpening his sensibilities. This worldly knowledge simply enhances the ego that takes us away from reality as well as humanity. But a contemplation of the wonder and variety of natural phenomena takes the mind out of rational thought and opens the doors of perception to the sublime. Some such idea of wonder is also delineated in stanza twenty seven of *Jap (ji)* where Sri Guru Nanak Dev says : "O Lord, which is Your door and abode where You sit and sustain the whole of the universe."[62]

Secondly, the seeker now also comes to note the various religious and mystical traditions. He rejects the notion of the orthodox that there is only one religion and one prophet to liberate mankind. He recognises many kinds of traditions, modes of learning, mythologies and cultures advocating different paths to Him. Consequently, there are countless possibilities of meeting that Supreme Reality. The seeker now becomes full of higher knowledge (*para vidya*) besides becoming aware of the futility of egoism and the resultant narrowmindedness. The subtle curtain and wall of falsehood about which Sri Guru Nanak Dev hints in the very first stanza of *Jap (ji)*, crumbles and the sun of truth illuminates everything with its glow. The understanding of interdependence imparts tolerance and his heart is filled with celestial bliss.

Third stage of spiritual elevation is delineated in stanza thirty-six of *Jap (ji)* which reads as follows:

> In the realm of knowledge the light of divine knowledge is resplendent.
> In that sphere reign mystic melody, sublime vision, wonder and joy.
> Inexpressibly beautiful is manifestation of the sphere of spiritual endeavour.
> Incomparable, beggaring description is what is forged therein.
> To attempt to speak of it would leave man speechless,
> And only ashamed of his rashness.
> There are fashioned absorption, wisdom, intellect and understanding.
> Forged therein is the vision of gods and mystics.[63]

Coming nearer to truth realisation is the *saram khand* with cultivation of all sorts of virtues. While studying Sri Guru Nanak Dev's view of life, we find that the great Guru never differentiated between man and man. Sri Guru Nanak Dev clearly knew that every individual is an important member of society and that his all-dimensional

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growth is essential for an endurable society. Sri Guru Nanak Dev wished to create a society with the help of such individuals (*gurmukhs*) in whom *surat*, *mat*, *man*, *buddh* coordinate to make man an embodiment of virtue. To keep a balance of emotions, desires, and thoughts is the aim of every individual on the way to spiritual progress.

Surat, *mat*, *man* and *buddh* are such four faculties as work jointly in an individual, and consequently influence the structure of society. *Surat* makes us remember and keeps record of all events and impressions. It may be called *chitt* also. Passions, emotional waves, come to *man*, whereas *mat* (intellect) is the sense of possession, a sort of ego which establishes the relations of individual with the outer objects of the world. *Buddh* confirms the work of these two mentioned above putting forward so many arguments and necessary precedents. These four jointly constitute *surat* which is a unifying thread among all and yet also a separate force.

In the *saram khand* Sri Guru Nanak Dev stresses upon making *surat* strong as well as pure by chiselling of *mat*, *man* and *buddh*. As Bhai Vir Singh says : "Sikhism advocates the path of *surat* uniting with the *Sabad* to attain the Divine."

In *saram khand* this nice work of chiselling of *antahkaran* is carried on with the help of altruistic works done by the individual. The individual attains the wisdom of gods, and a society of God-oriented, spirit-intoxicated individuals emerges. Head and heart congeal into a perfect whole, and the *surat* of the individual becomes a beautiful and dignified blend of all faculties. However, the individual now is required to adopt the *surat marg*.

To quote Dr Balbir Singh :

> Equipped with the insight of *surat* the man is more occupied with the harmony of the universe rather than with unity. *Sabad* in its primal sense signifies the musical harmony into which the *surat* gets easily absorbed. It is, thus, the aesthetic interest that begins to play on the chords of the soul and through the attunement opens the gateway to self-realisation.[64]

The fourth and fifth steps towards truth realisation are described in the penultimate stanza of *Jap (ji)* :

> Might is the expression of the sphere of Grace —
> for none other than He dwells there.
> Those in this domain are the real heroes, brave and might;
> brave and mighty saturated with His presence.
> They are completely absorbed in His praise, and their beauty is indescribable
> Those to God united suffer not mortality nor guile.
> In that sphere abide devotees assembled from the various universes,
> cherishing the holy Eternal ever in their hearts. In everlasting Bliss.
> The Formless Supreme Being abides in the realm of Eternity.
> Over His creation He casts His glance of grace.
> In that Realm are contained all the continents and the universes
> Exceeding in number all count. Of creation worlds upon worlds abide therein —

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All obedient to His Will; He watches over them in bliss,
And has each constantly in mind.
Saith Nanak : Hard as steel is the story of that realm to narrate.[65]

This stanza is divided into two parts : *karam khand* (realm of grace) and *sach khand* (the domain of truth). In fact, these stages are the direct outcome of the three stages mentioned earlier. When the *surat*, the *mat*, the *man*, and the *buddh* are chiselled and a cosmic consciousness is obtained through which a unifying force uniting all the objects of the world is realised, the grace of the All-Pervading showers upon the *jiva*. The heart of the *jiva*, so far ignorant, attains enlightenment by the grace of Almighty. Sri Guru Nanak Dev says that in this stage the *jiva* vibrates with ebullience. Consequently, the mesh of worldly desires is sundered and there remains nothing in the heart except love of the Lord. The heart and mind of *jiva* remain immersed in praise of the Supreme Being. His attitude towards action undergoes a sea-change. Every act is sacramental and devoted to God. We find this idea further elaborated by Sri Guru Gobind Singh when he says, "Khalsa is of Waheguru; All victories are His."[66] Now the adept works for the glory of God. It is a state of metempsychosis. A divine glow is visible on such faces. Time loses its hold, and with it flies away the fear of transience and death that haunt the ordinary mind. *Maya* cannot catch them in its net. Sri Guru Nanak Dev says that in this domain only the real *bhagats* reach. It is a state of perfect equipoise when quietude is attained, and mind detached from all its temptations, sees itself as it really is — a reflection of the Primordial Reality. The *bhagat* is not content with quiet contemplation. He is full of action and always thinks of going forward to help others attain what he has attained. This accounts for his ethical responsibility. Thus by reaching this domain of grace (*kirpa*, *karam*) the *jiva* becomes a *bhagat* in the true sense of the word. Then by becoming truthful the *jiva* enjoys *anand* (bliss) with the body. This blissful state of *karam khand* is not in any way separate from *sach khand* or the domain of supreme truth.

The culmination of spiritual development is described in *sach khand* where dwells the *Nirankar* (Formless). Here also we see that *sach khand* and *Nirankar* both have been used with a meaningful significance. We find nowhere in Sri Guru Granth Sahib *sach khand* as any geographical region. *Sach khand* is non-spatial and likewise *Nirankar* is also that supreme force, which is formless and beyond time and space. So here *Nirankar* is a unifying divine force working through all the objects of the universe. In this stage, the *jiva* ultimately finds the force in himself which always inspires him to work like that Supreme Force working in the universe but yet not fully exhausted in it. It further means that the *jiva* while reaching the abode of Truth becomes "of the world" but never wishes to become "worldly". He remains like the lotus unaffected by the influence of muddy water. Then all his actions become a cosmic play where he simply works for sheer delight without any ulterior motive. As hinted in *Jap (ji)*, God works incessantly and still never gets exhausted and remains ever blissful, the *jiva* also one with *sach khand* or *Nirankar* works and realises an internal *anand*. In this stage he clearly visualises the infinity of the works of that Supreme Force on the one hand,

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and on the other, clearly understands the incapacities of the finite *jiva*. Sri Guru Nanak Dev says that while thinking about the works being done through his body, he remains as a witness and goes on blooming like a flower full of divine grace. The Guru clearly says in the last line that it is as hard as iron to describe the climax of this spiritual experience.

Thus, in Sikhism, the *jiva* on the way to the spiritual realisation ascends to the realms of truth, yet his feet remain firm on earth. He is always conscious of his limitations as well as the infinity of the Supreme Being, but still he has to chisel his *antahkaran* to enable him to grasp and receive the divine grace.

MAN

Having deep concern for the masses, Sri Guru Nanak Dev could never see a man as high or low for an all-dimensional growth of society. He conceived of an ideal individual committed to truth and truthful living, and hailed him as *gurmukh*, whereas Sri Guru Arjun Dev called him *Brahmgiani* and Sri Guru Gobind Singh, *Khalsa*. Human beings have been loosely categorised by Sri Guru Nanak Dev as *bhagats* (spiritually active) and *sansaris* (engrossed in worldliness); the two are contrary to each other in nature and actions.[67] The *bhagats* may be accepted as inclined towards and fit for emancipation, whereas others are subject to transmigration and fall prey to pleasures and pains of the world. They come and go in the world and do not attain the ultimate abode. Bound to their deeds (*sanskars*) they commit sins and get depraved.[68] To obliterate this phenomenon, through Sikhism, creation of such a society is urged where *surat*, *mat*, *man* and *buddh* coordinate to make man a wonderful piece of creation.

According to Sikh thought, the four faculties of *antahkaran* are *surat*, *mat*, *man* and *buddh* which work jointly and influence the inner structure of man and the outer structure of society. *Surat* is that faculty which remembers and keeps record of all the events and their impressions. It may be called *chitt* also. Waves of emotions and passions come to *man* whereas *mat* is *mamtva*, a sense of possession, a sort of ego which establishes the relation of the individual with the outer objects of the world. *Buddh* confirms the work of the two mentioned above, putting forward so many arguments and necessary precedents. Indeed these three jointly make *surat*; in other words, *surat* is the unifying thread among all and yet a separate force as well. Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *Jap (ji)* lays stress on making *surat* strong as well as pure by the chiselling of *mat*, *man* and *buddh*.[69] Sikhism strives to evolve a society in which neither *mat* nor *man* nor *buddh* should have overemphasis. *Surat* of the individual should be a beautiful and dignified blend of all these faculties where head and heart are in harmony. This ideal harmony is possible when the path of superconsciousness is followed. Equipped with such an insight man finds harmony and unity in the universe.

Instead of considering man as Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Brahmin, Khatri, Vaish or Sudra, in Sikhism man is visualised as *jiva*, having come on this planet to earn goodness through complete surrender to God and service to His Creation. Sikhism, thus, consistent with its universalism, refuses to accredit the caste institution in social

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ethics; and its seers, on the basis of their direct intuitive knowledge, deny God having favoured a few by bringing them out from the higher parts of His body. As shown above, a *gurmukh*, the ideal man, is firm in his faith, for he follows the Basic Creed (*Moolmantar*) of Sikhism that stresses on unicity of the Reality, creativity, equality, beauty and culture of humanity. A *gurmukh* stands alone and waits patiently for the grace of the Guru. He realises the transcendence and immanence of the Supreme Being; is himself without enmity and fear; cherishes aesthetic values and becomes self-sufficient, but still accepts in his heart that his achievements are due to *Gurparsad* or Guru's grace. In the *Siddh-Gost*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev by becoming a pilgrim, seems to have been longingly searching for such *gurmukhs* all over the world.[70] Contrary to the *gurmukh*, the wanderers to the places of pilgrimage, internally stained but practitioners of outward cleanliness, are known as *manmukhs* in the Guru's hymns. These *manmukhs* have only themselves to blame for their doom. Sri Guru Nanak Dev tersely declares that if some one does not take food and tortures his body, he is born only to die and to be born again, because without accepting the true knowledge imparted by the Guru, he cannot be contented.[71]

HAUMAIN

In Sikh theology the terms *haumain*, *abhiman*, *khudi*, *garab*, *gumaan* and *ahankar* have been used time and again to clear the stand of Sikhism about this deep-rooted malady of man. The relationship between *haumain* and these other allied terms may be accepted as one of cause and effect, and not as being synonymous. *Haumain* being basic to the self of the degenerated man, *garab*, *gumaan* and *abhiman*, etc., are expressed as inevitable result of the former. To quote Sri Guru Nanak Dev from *Asa di Var*, love of life and attachment spring from *haumain*,[72] and this attachment is nothing but the tendency to cling to the physical pleasures which consequently lead man towards the means necessary for their attainment. Man, trapped in the pleasures of senses drifts away from God and commits deeds that lead not to salvation but transmigration. Sri Guru Angad Dev further clarifies : "The nature of *haumain* is that we act in ego (*haumain*). The bondage of the ego is that we are bound to wander through rebirths."[73] Thus, *haumain* may also be deemed a canvas on which are painted *garab*, *gumaan* and *abhiman* — further allurements and forces of the transmigrational wheel. Discussing *haumain* philosophically, Sri Guru Nanak Dev says : The world springs forth and gets created by *haumain* and undergoes afflictions when *Naam* is ignored."[74]

In Hindu compilation, *Sankhya, parkirti* is held to be the sole cause of *ahankar* and reverses the evolutionary table by accepting the *parkirti* itself and its evolute world as produced by *ahankar*, which is totally against what Sri Guru Nanak Dev perceived. Further, in the concept of *haumain* in Sikhism, one may find that the concepts of *maya* and *avidya* both have been merged in one.

The essential constituent of self-existence is the feeling (*bhavana*), and not the thought or empirical knowledge which albeit is necessary in order to develop the full meaning of self-hood to enable *haumain* to know itself and to say 'I'. This I-ness or

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ethics; and its seers, on the basis of their direct intuitive knowledge, deny God having favoured a few by bringing them out from the higher parts of His body. As shown above, a *gurmukh*, the ideal man, is firm in his faith, for he follows the Basic Creed (*Moolmantar*) of Sikhism that stresses on unicity of the Reality, creativity, equality, beauty and culture of humanity. A *gurmukh* stands alone and waits patiently for the grace of the Guru. He realises the transcendence and immanence of the Supreme Being; is himself without enmity and fear; cherishes aesthetic values and becomes self-sufficient, but still accepts in his heart that his achievements are due to *Gurparsad* or Guru's grace. In the *Siddh-Gost*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev by becoming a pilgrim, seems to have been longingly searching for such *gurmukhs* all over the world.[70] Contrary to the *gurmukh*, the wanderers to the places of pilgrimage, internally stained but practitioners of outward cleanliness, are known as *manmukhs* in the Guru's hymns. These *manmukhs* have only themselves to blame for their doom. Sri Guru Nanak Dev tersely declares that if some one does not take food and tortures his body, he is born only to die and to be born again, because without accepting the true knowledge imparted by the Guru, he cannot be contented.[71]

HAUMAIN

In Sikh theology the terms *haumain*, *abhiman*, *khudi*, *garab*, *gumaan* and *ahankar* have been used time and again to clear the stand of Sikhism about this deep-rooted malady of man. The relationship between *haumain* and these other allied terms may be accepted as one of cause and effect, and not as being synonymous. *Haumain* being basic to the self of the degenerated man, *garab*, *gumaan* and *abhiman*, etc., are expressed as inevitable result of the former. To quote Sri Guru Nanak Dev from *Asa di Var*, love of life and attachment spring from *haumain*,[72] and this attachment is nothing but the tendency to cling to the physical pleasures which consequently lead man towards the means necessary for their attainment. Man, trapped in the pleasures of senses drifts away from God and commits deeds that lead not to salvation but transmigration. Sri Guru Angad Dev further clarifies : "The nature of *haumain* is that we act in ego (*haumain*). The bondage of the ego is that we are bound to wander through rebirths."[73] Thus, *haumain* may also be deemed a canvas on which are painted *garab*, *gumaan* and *abhiman* — further allurements and forces of the transmigrational wheel. Discussing *haumain* philosophically, Sri Guru Nanak Dev says : The world springs forth and gets created by *haumain* and undergoes afflictions when *Naam* is ignored."[74]

In Hindu compilation, *Sankhya*, *parkirti* is held to be the sole cause of *ahankar* and reverses the evolutionary table by accepting the *parkirti* itself and its evolute world as produced by *ahankar*, which is totally against what Sri Guru Nanak Dev perceived. Further, in the concept of *haumain* in Sikhism, one may find that the concepts of *maya* and *avidya* both have been merged in one.

The essential constituent of self-existence is the feeling (*bhavana*), and not the thought or empirical knowledge which albeit is necessary in order to develop the full meaning of self-hood to enable *haumain* to know itself and to say 'I'. This I-ness or

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haumain according to Sri Guru Nanak Dev is a deep-rooted all-encompassing chronic malady whose remedy also is hidden in it. This apparently seems paradoxical how a cure can be there in the disease itself. If the *jiva*, who considers the *haumain* of status and wealth, etc., as his ornament, seriously takes note of the fact that he is living with an obnoxious disease which is making him internally hollow; he cannot afford to exist with it and would try to get away from it at the earliest possible. Thus, realisation of *haumain* itself becomes its own remedy. Further, Sri Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Nanak, also elaborates how *haumain* can be erased from the self. He says :

> O saints, tell me the remedy by which my self-hood (*haumain*) and ego may be vanquished. ...if I acknowledge all beings to be God's creation and become the dust (for others to tread upon); I see, I realise, the Lord within me and the wall of doubt is shattered; if at the Guru's door I attain the nectar of *Naam*, the cure for all, then, O Nanak, say — he in whose lot is it so written meets with the Guru and his disease (of *haumain*) is dispelled.[75]

Thus, according to Sri Guru Granth Sahib , for the effacement of *haumain* from the self, one is urged to believe in the immanence of God, to be humble as dust, to resort to *Naam* and to inculcate the grace of Almighty.

SABAD GURU

Contemplating the role of the Guru as the Enlightener and the epitome of contentment, *dharam*, divine knowledge, and charity, Sri Guru Nanak Dev says that the 'Guru' alone can show the path because he is the tree of contentment which flowers in faith and gives fruits of wisdom. Watered by the Lord's love, this tree remains ever green, and its fruit ripens through deeds and meditation. Those who taste these fruits are glorious, and this tree (Guru) is the Lord's supreme gift to man.

> Saith Nanak : The Master is the tree of contentment and forbearance; righteousness its flower, enlightenment the fruit. This tree by joy in God keeps fresh and green; by practice of meditation it is ripened. With joy in the Lord it is consumed, by such as the supreme charity of selfless action dispense.[76]

This body, according to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, is a pot made of clay and to clay shall it return. This tempestuous world-ocean cannot be crossed without the help of the Guru, the true Lord.[77] More often than not, God has been considered and accepted as the true Guru in the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, because God himself is servant (*sewak*), *satguru*, the creator of the universe, and the door to everything :

> He Himself is the creator, the immanent maker of the cosmos. He has created the beings and judges them. He Himself is the Supreme Preceptor, Himself servant, and Himself has raised the creation.[78]

Different dimensions of invisible forms of God, the Guru, have been put forth in Sri Guru Granth Sahib . As the creator of the cosmos, at some places He is known as *Sunn*, *Hukam*, and at other places *Naam*, *Sabad* and *Onkar*, but the *Sabad* and *Onkar* aspects have got exhaustive treatment in the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. It is clearly stated in *Siddh-Gost* that by realising Him here, there, and everywhere, we can

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get across the world ocean through *Sabad* Guru : "By the Master's teaching is the ocean of existence crossed, and the seeker realises the Lord in all spots to abide."[79]

On being asked by the Siddhas about his Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev replied that *Sabad* was his Guru and his *surat* (meditative faculty) was the disciple of that Guru.[80] It may be noted here that both *Sabad* and *surat* are subtle entities that can be understood only by a disciplined mind. The subtle merges with the subtle, transcending this body. According to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, this *Sabad* is the Guru and the *pir*. It is a deep and profound entity without which the world is lost in its senses.[81]

Naam and *Sabad* superficially look to be synonymous but they have a subtly different shade. *Naam* may be likened to the tranquil ocean of the whole existence, whereas *Sabad* is its operative form through which the whole creation of various hues and qualities becomes manifest. In the process of attainment of *sahaj*, in a creed wherein no visible form or symbol of the Supreme Being is permitted to be adopted as that would be idolatry, the *Sabad* is the sole medium through which the Lord may be approached. Being a sound, it is itself abstract, incorporeal and formless. The supremely objective name of the Creator — *Ik Onkar* is accepted as *Satnaam* by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *Gurbani*, for all other names of the Supreme Being are relative and based on His actions which limit His all-encompassing nature. Another name on which the devotee may concentrate and that which he may repeat and contemplate upon is *Waheguru* (the wondrous Lord) which though not used by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, but by Bhai Gurdas, also denotes the same sense as emitted by *Satnaam* denoting the ever-existent Lord which is further wonder in this transitory world. To repeat and contemplate the Name of the Lord is in fact the essence of prayer and devotion in Sikhism. *Sabad* or *Naam* in *Gurbani* stands for devotion to God. *Naam* or such devotion is the highest attainment to be aimed at by the devotee. In *Asa di Var*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev affirms that without devotion to *Naam* the pastemark and sacred thread are of little worth.[82] *Sabad*, like *Naam*, bears a deeply esoteric meaning with multiple shades of significance. Literally, *Sabad* is sound and its applied meaning is holy Word. The Word (Logos, *Kalaam*) in other religious systems, too, bears a mystical meaning.

In Sikh religious thought, *Sabad* has a special significance. It is not used only as noun sound, *Gur updés*, *Brahma*, *dharam*, message and many other allied meanings have been attributed to this term. As the hymns of Namdev and Surdas are famous by the names of *Abhangas* and *Visnupadas*, respectively, the hymns of Sri Guru Granth Sahib are called *shabads*. The word *Sabad* has a subtle meaning also which refers to the mental world. In his thirty hymns,[83] Sri Guru Nanak Dev, while attributing spiritual meaning to all the fifteen dates of one fortnight of lunar month, explains the import of the fourth day (*chauth*), saying that four are *Vedas* created, four are the sources of life, i.e., egg, foetus, sweat and vegetation, and likewise four varieties are there of the speech or *sabad*. However, these four variations have not been explained anywhere in the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev though a hint has been given as alluded to above.

In Indian religious lore *Sabad* in the form of expression of individuality has been

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understood as *para sabad* – pure consciousness; *pasyanti sabad* – the subtle ideas which only consciousness directly sees or perceives; *madhyam sabad* – the midway sound between the ideal form of speech and the articulate sound form of speech; *vaikhari sabad* – the voice coming out through the cooperative effort of the vocal organs. To make *vaikhari sabad* visible, different syllables or the *matrikas* have been coined by the people living in different geographical conditions. At this stage, the *para sabad* is represented through phonetic constituent of *vaikhari sabad* in the forms of letters.

In Sikhism, this *para sabad* of the Gurus and the *bhagats*, made visual in the form of Sri Guru Granth Sahib , is accepted as Guru; and recitation and deeper contemplation upon its hymns are deemed to carry the devotee to the regions of superconsciousness.

Bhai Vir Singh further explains that the Guru — *Waheguru* — the educator, the giver of life, and the saviour, is unmanifest and resides in invisible regions. We came to know him as Sri Guru Nanak Dev when he came on earth. That divine Guru made great men walk in His light and became the sustainer of the *bani* (*Sabad*). The divine Guru-light collected the manifested hymns also of the earlier lights. After scrutiny and selection much more was added to it. The problems of spiritual life, the details about the grouping steps of the *sadhaks* and the experiences of men reaching light from darkness were retained in the *Pothi Sahib* (which later came to be known as Granth Sahib and further installed as Sri Guru Granth Sahib), with appropriate comments. Finally, the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun compiled the *Sagun Sabad Brahm* in the shape of a scripture for all. In fact, the holy scripture was first illumined in the heart of the Guru in the shape of divine knowledge and from these, through divine melody, became visible in a musical order. Needless to say that for Sri Guru Nanak Dev, *Sabad* is the basic expression of Truth, the *Brahm* who is all pervasive and panacea for all the ailments.

HUKAM

The ideal that the whole of creation and its attendant virtues and vices originate in and are sustained by *Hukam*, is dealt with by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in the very beginning of *Jap (ji)*. *Hukam* or the Divine Will being central to the doctrines of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, every Sikh of the Guru is expected to and is urged to accept it happily and be in tune with it. Says Sri Guru Nanak Dev : "Whosoever is obedient to the Lord's Will, accesses His treasures; the spurious do not find place there and are cast among the defiled ones."[84]

In *Siddh-Gost*, the Guru, while speculating about *Hukam*, becomes ecstatic and says that *Hukam* is the realisation of infinite wonder, and that whosoever learns to recognise it becomes adept in the art of living and competent to take cognizance of truth. He becomes pure by suppressing his ego, and he is called a true yogi. Sri Guru Nanak Dev holds truth and truthful living as the greatest ideals of life which can be achieved only by accepting *Hukam* which is ingrained in the innerself of the *jiva*.[85]

Many Arabic-Persian equivalents of *Hukam*, namely, *qudrat*, *raza*, and *furman*

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are time and again used in Sri Guru Granth Sahib , whereas *amr* though also used in the sense of Divine Law is not so frequently used. *Amar* as used by Sri Guru Nanak Dev is the Punjabi term for *amr* which occurs in many verses of *Quran* in the sense of command of God. Islamic scholars, on the one hand, seem to postulate, or at least to consider as admissible, the identity of *amr* with the Will, but on the other hand, they call divine *amr* the power which is given to the prophet as an inherent faculty and which is superior to intellect. At a few places *amar*, *diban*, *Hukam* and *furman* are juxtaposed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev to clear their connotation as the truth :

> O God ! Your *amar* or the divine law is true,
> And Your justice is also nothing but truth.
> Your *Hukam* as well as *furman* are also true.[86]

Along with *Hukam* and *amar* another very important concept, also taken from Arabic, is *raza*. *Raza* like *Hukam* is also Divine Will, and these two terms are generally employed in the Guru's teachings in conjunction. Among Muslim Sufis, who had established their centres of religious practice and propagation in Punjab two to three centuries before Sri Guru Nanak Dev's time, *raza* was a popularly current term, and had passed into the thought and speech of the masses. Hence, in order to emphasize the religious duty of submission to the Divine Will, Sri Guru Nanak Dev employed *Hukam* and *raza* so frequently in his message. Indeed, *raza* has a two-fold meaning — a) the attitude of submission on man's part to the Divine Will, and b) the Divine Will itself. It is in the latter sense that *raza* is mostly employed in the Sikh thought. As Sikh history tells, even in the face of impending death at the hands of tyrants, in undergoing martyrdom, the Guru's Sikhs accepted these happenings as *Hukam* and *raza* and faced their sufferings unflinchingly (*Téra bhanna mitha lagai*).

Apart from *Hukam*, *qudrat* is another word used to denote power and might of the All-Pervasive Lord. *Qudrat* is inclusive of *Hukam*, which is its operative form. *Qudrat* and *Hukam* are the underlying laws of the universe and have a moral bearing. This upholds good and destroys evil. As is constantly reiterated in *Gurbani*, in the long run, falsehood shall fall and Truth prevail. This inevitability of the triumph of righteousness sustains faith and makes sorrow and sufferings appear only to be temporary phases in the experience of the self, which ultimately must merge into the universal self, *Parmatma*, and rise to a state which is above joy and sorrow. *Hukam* thus, is not an arbitrary fiat or command but the immutable law wherein only Truth prevails, and all that happens is only a manifestation of this divine process.

HUKAM AND FREE WILL

While propounding the concept of *Hukam* in the opening hymn of Sri Guru Granth Sahib , Sri Guru Nanak Dev says that "*jiva* gets created in *Hukam*, it cultivates praises in *Hukam*, becomes good and bad, and attains bliss and suffering."[87] Here it seems as if the *jiva* is totally helpless because it has been shown becoming good and bad in God's *Hukam*. To be good and bad in the Will of God gives an impression that *jiva* is not responsible for its bad deeds, for goodness and evil are predestined and are actions in

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accordance with *Hukam*. The *jiva* seems to have no free will for action. At another place in Sri Guru Granth Sahib , Sri Guru Nanak Dev again hints at this fact and says:

> All are created and engaged in action in obedience to *Hukam*. *Hukam* destroys and in *Hukam* alone one merges in truth. Nanak, what He desires is done and there is nothing in the control of these creatures.[88]

At this point, it is quite relevant to know about the free will of *jiva*, because when good and evil are being enacted in *Hukam*, then logically the responsibility should not rest upon *jiva*. In the above quoted passage from Sri Guru Granth Sahib , while we see the Guru accepting everything created from and working in *Hukam*, we find in *Asa di Var*, Sri Guru Nanak Dev saying that "we should execute our works with (the efforts of) our own hands."[89] Other Gurus also state in their hymns that the *jiva*, if it so desires, can become full of right consciousness with its own efforts at any stage. If *jiva* becomes subordinate to *Hukam* and is chained in the bondage of actions and is unable to do anything on its own, then the question arises — what is the use and significance of the sermons that by following a particular path one can make one's life good or bad ? No doubt man is subordinate to *Hukam*, but in the light of *Gurbani*, man can change his destiny by making an effort. The Guru says : "Lead life by making an effort to earn your livelihood; meditate on *Naam* to attain bliss."[90]

However, that energy-thread which is activising and sustaining the whole universe full of names and forms (*Naam* and *Roop*) may be called *Hukam*. This internal link in the form of energy is called *bhaiy* and Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *Asa di Var* also accepts the fact that the whole paraphernalia of the universe is controlled by *bhaiy* : "In fear of the Lord (*bhaiy*) move sun and moon."[91]

Hukam in the form of *bhaiy* is impossible to disobey. Human life, *karma*, fruit of *karma*, are all different forms of *Hukam* and the Sikh ideal is to understand and adjust according to the mystery and the infinite expansion of this *Hukam*, the immutable law. Sri Guru Nanak Dev believes that one is the true devotee and servant who accepts *Hukam*. By surrendering to *Hukam* one becomes acceptable in the mansion of the Lord.[92]

Karma shakti inherent in the Supreme *Hukam* is also great, and scientists have now definitely established that the energy of *karma* is never destroyed and that energy which appears today under one name and form, reappears under another name and form later. This recurrence of names and forms is known as the cycle of birth and death or *sansar* according to the philosophy of the absolute self; and that energy which is the foundation of these names and forms is synthetically called *Brahm* and distributively, *jivatma*. *Parkirti*, *maya*, laws and by-laws concerning the creation are various names for the influx of the *karma shakti* of *Hukam*. Now, if we consider *karma* from the point of view of empiricism, we find that man has no freedom of will and that his actions are circumscribed in all directions by *Hukam*. But, if we take the evidence of conscience and the nature of human beings, it will be seen that although every human being accepts in the core of his heart that he does not possess the power of making the sun rise in the west, yet he believes that doing or not doing something after careful consideration when there is one course which is sinful and another which

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is meritorious, or one course which is righteous and another which is unrighteous, is a thing which is subject to the control of his own will. On the basis of this premise justice is dispensed.

However, the question whether *jiva* is competent, independent, and free to think and choose about good or bad still remains unanswered. Can *jiva* get away securely from the current of *Hukam* and its *karma shakti* ? The freedom of will of *jiva* can be further understood with the help of an example. A teacher on account of his power of knowledge and experience very soon comes to know about the mental level of each and every student in the class. Now if the students are told by the teacher that a particular student (say, x) would fail and the another student (say, y) would pass, and if it indeed does so happen at the time of the declaration of the examination results, can we accept that the student 'x' failed only because the teacher had said so and that 'y' passed because it was the '*Hukam*' of the teacher ? Can we accept that the student who failed was not free to work hard ? It is explicit here that the teacher with foresight is free to deliver his judgement in the context of the student, and simultaneously the student 'x' is also free to do hard work in order to succeed. God, being omniscient and the great Guru, the great Teacher, knows about every movement of *jiva*, but *jiva* is also free to choose good or bad within the boundaries of *Hukam*. Free will of the *jiva* can be further understood through an example of vapour. Although there is no pressure force in free diffused vapour in the sky, yet when it is enclosed in a vessel, it begins to exert a pressure on that vessel. Similarly, before taking birth, *jiva* remains merged in *Hukam* of *Hukami* (*Paramatma*). At that time there is no question of the bondage of *karma* and the release therefrom. But as the *jivatma*, which is a part of the *Paramatma* is caught inside the cage of the body and reason, the bodily organs, due to the inspiration of the *atma*, also acquire the desire and inclination to do those actions which can liberate *jiva* from this cage. This is what is known in ordinary language as the free will of the actions of *jivatma* in the context of its release from the body, but it nowhere implies that having this freedom of will, we are to stand against the Supreme Will or *Hukam*. When God is considered as Father of all, then His *Hukam*, its powers in the shape of influx of *karma*, is definitely for the welfare of all. *Jiva* with its inherent discerning wisdom, is free to choose between good and evil. There is no question of leaving *karma* because we are expected to engage ourselves in good *karma*. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, in *Moolmantar*, calling *Onkar* as Truth, immediately proceeds to characterise Him also as the Creator (*Karta Purakh*); then how can a man made in the image of God remain away from actions. However, in the words of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, *jiva* has to inspire itself only for good actions (*shubh karman*).

Although Sri Guru Nanak Dev bows his head before the all-pervading and all-combining force of *Hukam*, yet he simultaneously also accepts that nobody should think that he is going to get anything without putting in an effort. As you sow, so shall you reap :

> Let none reckon that despite evil-doing in the hereafter bliss he shall attain. As man's actions, such shall his reward be.[93]

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On account of their own actions, some get close to Him and some go astray.[94]

Sikhism accepts that blame for one's own bad actions cannot be put on someone else, and that we ourselves are to be held responsible for our good or bad deeds.

Ethics

Sikh ethico-religious life constitutes that path of morality envisaged initially by Sri Guru Nanak Dev which is the path of conscious orientation of values of human life leading to the crossroads of active service in the weal of mankind. Cultivation of godly vision is indeed the highest attainment of man; but according to Sikhism the inner communion and allowing of the *Hukam* (Will) of God to flow unobstructed through *jiva*, eschewing ego, is a unique aesthetic and beautific disposition which becomes a natural corollary of virtuous life capable of looking after the common interests of humanity.

To know Sikh ethical values one has to depend upon Sri Guru Granth Sahib , the works of the tenth Nanak and Bhai Gurdas, besides a few *Rahitnamas* of Sikhs closely associated with Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Ethical values concerned with education and culture of the various praxis, impulses, and propensities, work not only as props for spiritual life, but rather prepare man for mustering courage and virtues in order to have an all-comprehensive outlook of life here and hereafter. In Hinduism, the supreme ideal is *moksha*, but *dharam* (ethical virtue) has also been accepted as one of the four ideals. In the *Gita*, though final liberation has been set as goal, the *nishkam karma* also has been much eulogised. Buddhism though accepts *nirvan* as the final ideal, yet nobody can set aside the eight-fold ethical path laid down by the tradition. In *Jap (ji)*, the ethical life (*dharam khand*) invariably culminates in the spiritual life (*sach khand*), which in other words, is nothing but a fine blend of vertical and horizontal growth of human psyche capable of becoming a strong cohesive force in social milieu. *Gurbani* being a cogent synthesis of spiritual and moral values, Sikh ethical values indeed are catalysts for the attainment of divine experience. Sikhism unequivocally appreciates the creative values of life, because religion and life are knit together and, therefore, inseparable. While not ignoring any aspect of human personality, Sri Guru Nanak Dev accepts every possibility of the unfoldment and culture of the inner self at any age, young or old.

In most religions, the stress is on suppressing the proclivites and propensities of the mind attached to the five senses. But in Sikhism righteous use of these impulses is regarded as the base of harmonious social as well as individual household life. These so-called five evils may become a potent instrument on the way to self-realisation. Says Sri Guru Nanak Dev :

Make concupiscence and wrath the hoes and dig thy (body) farm with them. The more you hoe the more peace you attain. Nobody can efface the (fruit of) deeds done.[95]

Sikhism lays special stress on altruism, justice, compassion, love, and service. Here the usurpation of what belongs to others is not only vice, but it is rather a sin. Exploitation of any kind has been denounced by quoting an example. Says Sri Guru

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Nanak Dev : "If blood on clothes defiles it, will not the minds of those be defiled who by way of exploitation suck the blood of human beings ?"[96]

Man, entirely bound and engrossed in the psycho-physical veil of *maya*, tends to be self-centred. Observation and practice of ethical values bring him out of his cocoon and make him as immense as God, the Supreme Truth. Sikhism always accepts truth as the guide to human conduct and, therefore, the fount of all morality and spirituality. Hence, Sri Guru Nanak Dev in most of his hymns raises the question about how to become truthful or *sachiar*. The problem of being *sachiar* is posed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev at the very outset in *Jap (ji)*.

A *gurmukh*, the Sikh human ideal, knows that knowledge of truth is a high achievement; but still higher is truthful living. He works incessantly in tune with the Divine Will – Truth,[97] and observes the moral codes laid down by the Guru — urging man to work, meditate and be truly devoted to the common cause, i.e., *kirat karna*, *Naam japna*, and *vand chhakna*. In view of the cultivation of higher values of *Gurbani*, the real wisdom (*vivék*) should be distinguished from bookish knowledge, and sense of humanitarianism ought to be evolved by being one with humanity. Sense of awe and wonder as enunciated by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *gian khand* of *Jap (ji)* and not of arrogance should be part and parcel of life. Contentment, truthful conduct, right effort, fearlessness, compassion, humility, non-attachment and temperance should be the constituents of ethical life lived by a *gurmukh*.

Social Concerns

Tolerance and service (*sewa*) are the cardinal pillars of Sikh social concerns. The sublime conception of spiritual life in which the reigning idea is not renunciation, but action as *sewa* with indifference to rewards, was enunciated by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in the dark age of warring creeds which were incapable of guiding the life of the community along fruitful lines. The impulse of *sewa* in Sikhism finds expression in altruistic moral deeds not excluding service of society in its various spheres, and crusading for justice and human rights. Says Sri Guru Nanak Dev : "All the created beings are Thine own, without service is no one's life fruitful."[98]

This entire orientation is distinctively characteristic of the course of Sikhism in the times of the Gurus (1469-1708 CE) and shows a sensitive response to the demands of the historical situation no less than the universal moral law.

Community service in some form is considered an essential part of Sikh worship. This may consist in doing with one's hands the congregational service, like looking after *sangat's* shoes, cooking or serving food in *langar*, washing utensils and floors, etc. In recent history, at least twice or thrice this community service known as *kar sewa* has taken place to desilt the pool of Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar. Digging the foundations, to dredge the earth and other such labour to erect, reconstruct or repair a gurdwara is also known as *kar sewa*. Many tasks of public weal such as construction of roads, bridges and historical shrines have been performed jointly by *sangats*. While prayer, meditation, and devotion are so greatly and emphatically commended, *sewa* has the role

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of bringing completion and fulfilment to spiritual life. It is an established tradition in Sikh society that all Sikhs must perform service, in the form of humble manual labour. Says Sri Guru Nanak Dev : "Only through devoted service in this world may one find a resting place at the Divine Portal."[99]

The Gurus pray to God to grant them the gift of the humblest service, such as waving the fan over *sangat* in summer, to draw water and sweep floors in religious places. Prays Sri Guru Ram Das, the fourth Nanak, in a hymn brimming with devotion: "May I wave the fan and draw water; and partake of whatever Thou doth grant."[100]

As a corollary to the doctrine of *sewa*, the spirit of tolerance is also embedded in Sikh thought. The mystical approach of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, which is emphasised everywhere in the sacred texts, has conditioned the Sikh mind towards tolerance. Says Sri Guru Amar Das, the third Nanak : "O Lord, redeem the world burning in the fire (of malice, violence and hatred), through any gate (of *dharam*)."[101]

Obviously, one finds here the Guru not eulogizing or disclaiming any particular faith for final liberation. Implicitly, all the religions are seen as possible ways towards spiritual elevation. One might further realise that to guide the Sikhs, perhaps the hymns of the Gurus were sufficient; but the inclusion of Jaidev, Namdev, Ravidas, Kabir, Ramanand, Sheikh Farid, Bhikhan, etc., in Sri Guru Granth Sahib , apart from other reasons, had in the background a definite vision of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, of teaching tolerance to the people. As the history of Punjab testifies, this idea further welded the masses to take up cudgels jointly against the tyranny by the fanatic rulers. Sheikh Farid, Kabir, Namdev and other *bhagats* are revered persons in Sikh tradition. Sri Guru Gobind Singh, who had to fight several battles against the fanatic Mughals and timorous Hindus, in his *bani* has emphasised the identity of 'house of worship' of the Hindu temple and the Muslim mosque, and of *puja* (the Hindu worship) and *namaz* (the Muslim prayer), even while religious freedom of non-Muslims (and even of Muslims not of the ruler's persuasion) in the period of Aurangzeb, was suppressed. *Jaziya*, or tax on non-Muslims was reimposed and a state of inter-religious strife was created. Guru Tegh Bahadur, symbolising fortitude and forbearance, advocated tolerance and respect of the human person, and for this he was arrested and imprisoned, and in November 1675 CE martyred at Delhi with three of his devoted followers.

Caste

The attitude of almost all the *bhagats* of medieval India towards the caste system was critical, but their opposition remained weak as many of them hailed from the so-called lower castes. These revered *bhagats* inspired many to shatter the dogmas of worship and turn to religion in practical life, but they failed to bring about any significant change in the prevailing system. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib , one finds Namdev (a tailor), Kabir (a weaver), Ravdas (a cobbler), speaking in a melancholic note about the injustices and cruelties done by the high to the low castes. Kabir laments that all men mock at him for his low caste.[102] He is fierce when he asks a *pandit* how he was a Brahmin and Kabir a Sudra and how he could make a distinction between the blood

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of Kabir and that of his own.[103] Although Sri Guru Nanak Dev himself was born in a higher caste, he chose, from the very beginning of his life, his lifelong companion Mardana, who not only belonged to a so-called lower caste (Mirasi), but was also born into a Muslim family. Mardana remained with Sri Guru Nanak Dev for forty seven years up to the end of his life. For this revolutionary act, though the Guru had to face many an admonition from home as well as society of highbrows around, yet he was firm on his doctrine : "Vain is the pride of caste, vain the pride of glory; the Lord alone gives different shades to all."[104]

The Sikh Gurus not merely preached equality theoretically, but also put it into practice. Sri Guru Nanak Dev denounces that form of spirituality which cannot produce respect in the hearts of people for their fellow beings at all levels. This is well illustrated by the popularly known story of Bhai Lalo, a low-born carpenter, and Malik Bhag Chand (Bhago) a high official. Sri Guru Nanak Dev preferred to stay at the house of Lalo and declined the invitation of the high official, who was known to be rich and a highbrow. To deeply etch such thinking on the heart and mind of the Sikhs and to reject the caste criterion on which account India had suffered social as well as political slavery for many centuries, Sri Guru Nanak Dev established the institution of *langar*, abolishing all barriers. The Guru himself freely served food to all castes and used to eat with them on the same floor. He would say that the lowest among the lowly were his companions and that he had nothing to do with the so-called "rich elders".[105] Even to this day, *langar* is an important institution in Sikh religion and in *gurdwaras* food is prepared and served to all free of cost and without any discrimination.

To uplift the lower castes was indeed a novel experiment that found its ultimate fulfilment in the creation of the Khalsa by the Tenth Master, when the five beloved ones — *Panj Piaré,* came from various classes and corners of the land. There was a farmer, a water carrier, a washerman, a barber and a shopkeeper. Everyone, be he / she of high or low caste, is welcome to the fold of the Khalsa that broke away regional and social barriers. In Sikhism, a dialogue with all the religious denominations and social layers of society has been initiated by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, and Sri Guru Granth Sahib may be taken as an ideal example of this spiritual and social dialogue.

— *J.S.*

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ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰਾ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰਾ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਜਗੁ ਬਉਰਾਨੰ ॥
82. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 467.
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਿਆ ਟਿਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਤਗੁ ॥
83. Ibid., *Raag Bilaval*, p. 839.

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84. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 421.
ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਜੋ ਚਲੈ ਸੋ ਪਵੈ ਖਜਾਨੈ ॥ ਖੋਟੇ ਠਵਰ ਨ ਪਾਇਨੀ ਰਲੇ ਜੂਠਾਨੈ ॥

85. Ibid., *Jap, pauri* 1, p. 1.
ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥

86. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 463.
ਸਚਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਅਮਰੁ ਸਚਾ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਸਚਾ ਫੁਰਮਾਣੁ ॥

87. Ibid., *Jap, pauri* 2, p. 1.
ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥
ਹੁਕਮੀ ਉਤਮੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਈਅਹਿ ॥

88. Ibid., *Sri Raag*, p. 55.
ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਭੇ ਊਪਜਹਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਲੈ ਵਸਿ ਹੈ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਹਿ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਇਨਾ ਜੰਤਾ ਵਸਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

89. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 474.
ਆਪਣ ਹਥੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸਵਾਰੀਐ ॥

90. Ibid., *Raag Gujri*, p. 522.
ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖ ਭੁੰਚੁ ॥ ਧਿਆਇਦਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਿਲੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਤਰੀ ਚਿੰਤ ॥

91. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 464.
ਭੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਭੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਚੰਦੁ ॥

92. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 471.
ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਤਾ ਖਸਮੈ ਕਾ ਮਹਲੁ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥

93. Ibid., *Raag Suhi*, p. 730.
ਮਤੁ ਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਜਾਇ ਅਰੀ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਇਸੀ ॥

94. Ibid., *Jap, slok*, p. 8.
ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

95. Ibid., *Raag Basant*, p. 1172.
ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧਿ ਦੁਇ ਕਰਹੁ ਬਸੋਲੇ ਗੋਡਹੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਗੋਡਹੁ ਤਿਉ ਤੁਮ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਨ ਮੇਟਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥

96. Ibid., *Raag Majh*, p. 140.
ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ ॥ ਜੋ ਰਤਿ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥

97. Ibid., *Raag Ramkali*, p. 942.
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਾਚੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

98. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 354.
ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਫਲੁ ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

99. Ibid., *Sri Raag*, p. 26.
ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

100. Ibid., *Raag Suhi*, p. 757.
ਪਖਾ ਫੇਰੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਢੋਵਾ ਜੋ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਸੋ ਖਾਈ ॥

101. Ibid., *Raag Bilaval*, p. 853.
ਜਗਤੁ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਰਖਿ ਲੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਉਬਰੈ ਤਿਤੈ ਲੈਹੁ ਉਬਾਰਿ ॥

102. Ibid., *Slok Bhagat Kabir jio ké.*, p. 1394.
ਕਬੀਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਕਉ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਹਸਨੇਹਾਰੁ ॥

103. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 324.
ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਸੂਦ ॥ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਲੋਹੂ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਦੂਧ ॥

104. Ibid., *Sri Raag*, p. 83.
ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ ॥

105. Ibid., *Sri Raag*, p. 15.
ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥

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4

SRI GURU NANAK DEV
— A TRIBUTE —

Prophet of the People

Hailing Sri Guru Nanak Dev as "a Prophet of the People", Sadhu T.L. Vaswani stated in 1952 CE :

> At rare intervals in history does appear a man like Nanak... whose life opened an era in the history of India and Asia — in the history of humanity.[1]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev enjoyed so much affection, reverence and renown even in his own lifetime that his name had become a legend from Mecca in the west to Dhaka in the east, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) in the south and Tibet in the north. He was acclaimed as *Pir-i-Hind*[2] in the Muslim world abroad and his name stands inscribed as *Hazrat Rab-i-Majid Baba Nanak Faqir Aulia* on a memorial in Baghdad,[3] the citadel of Muslim culture. At home, his followers from amongst the Hindus called him *Sat Sri Guru Nanak Dev*,[4] while those from amongst the Muslims called him *Hazrat Nanak Shah*.[5] The Jogis adored him as *Nanak Nath* and the Buddhists as *Nanak Lama*, thus vying with one another to proclaim him as their own in his name and appellation too. The laymen, particularly of the Indian subcontinent, have all along been remembering him as Baba Nanak — the revered elder Nanak. People of all castes, creeds and callings still revere him as the "Emperor of holy men, Guru of the Hindus and *Pir* of the Muslims."[6]

His first 'biographer' and a near-contemporary, the highly learned Bhai Gurdas, describes him as *Vadda Purakh*[7] — Great Man, *Akal Roop*[8] — Godlike, *Guran-Gur*[9] — Preceptor of the preceptors, and *Jagat-Gur-Baba*[10] — Divine World Teacher. He writes:

> God, the Bountiful, heard the wail (of suffering humanity) and sent Sri Guru Nanak Dev to the world.[11]

He further writes :

> With the appearance of SatSri Guru Nanak Dev the mist (of ignorance and sham) disappeared from the world, and light spread everywhere.[12]

The fifth Nanak, Sri Guru Arjun Dev (1563-1606 CE), calls him *Guru-God*.[13] In another verse he observes :

> What to say of me, the ignorant one, millions of sinners have been saved by his

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teaching. Whoever happened to see or hear Sri Guru Nanak Dev, was saved from (the ordeal of) being cast into the womb again.[14]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev's earliest known 'biography', the *Puratan Janamsakhi*, also describes him as *Guru-God*, addressed as such by God, as follows, during his audience with Him in the Divine Court :

> Nanak ! whoever shall be blessed by you, shall have My Blessings. My Name is *Parbrahm-Parmesar — Supreme Lord-God*, and your name is *Guru Parmesar — Guru-God*.[15]

Manohar Das Meharban (1581-1640 CE) describes him as such in another way in a soliloquy of the cruel thugs :

> On hearing just this, they were amazed and realised : 'He does not look like a man of the world; he is not a *faqir* either; he is some great man who seems to have had the privilege of meeting God. To our good luck, we are meeting in him, God Himself.' Then, dropping their halters, they bowed to touch the feet of Guru Baba Nanak.[16]

The chronicles also tell us that whosoever met Sri Guru Nanak Dev said that "never in their lives had they seen a man so near to God."[17]

Man — First and Last

Yes, he was very much 'near to God', rather one with Him; yet he was a man first and last, though a unique one indeed ! He never claimed himself to be a saint or a seer, a saviour or a redeemer, much less God-incarnate. He never arrogated to himself any attribute of God in the absolute sense. As a matter of fact, he did not claim to be anything more than a mere human being. So much so, that he is stated to have proclaimed, "I am composed of five elements, and my name is Nanak."[18]

He, thus, always preferred to be known as a 'man', a man among men, about whom, including himself, he once said :

> Human are we, our life lasting a breath;
> Knowing not till what hour we are granted life.[19]

He was so deeply conscious of the transience of life that he made it clear at various points in his writings, preserved for all times to come in their original and authentic form. Referring at one point to the various remarks made about his person, by those not understanding or realising his God-intoxication, he says :

> Some call me a ghost, some a goblin. Some call me a mere forsaken man. But I, insane Nanak, am mad after the Divine King. I have become crazy after Him. And I recognise none other than God.[20]

His great emphasis on the oneness, immanence and transcendence of God and his creed of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man conclusively prove that he never even thought of posing himself to be "specially endowed by God" or "God-incarnate". His word-picture of God, which later became the cornerstone of Sikh belief, reads :

> He is the Sole Supreme Being; of eternal manifestation; Creator, Immanent Reality; Without Fear; Without Rancour; Timeless Form; Unincarnated; Self Existent; Realised by grace of the holy Preceptor.[21]

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This clearly illustrates the uniqueness of God's attributes as also the impossibility of God incarnating in human form ("beyond birth...undying").

People have, no doubt, been ascribing divinity to him and identifying him with God; but he himself never claimed any such thing. Syad Mohammad Latif is, therefore, right in saying that "unlike the Arabian prophet, he (Nanak) never claimed... ... nor did he ever boast of being gifted with supernatural powers, or attribute any of his acts to a power not at the command of other men." Sri Guru Nanak Dev said that he was a man among men, mortal as they were and sinful. He said that he was a *faqir* at the threshold of God's Court. "Thou art the incorporeal Creator and Nanak is Thy slave — *Tu hi hai Nirankar Kartar, Nanak banda Téra*" was the theme of Nanak's life. He took particular delight in causing this theme to be played on the *rabab* by the favourite companion of his toils — Bhai Mardana. His doctrine was that God is all in all and he taught all to believe in the Creator, the Lord of Lords, the one God, self-existent, incomprehensible, omnipotent, without beginning and everlasting. Good deeds were nothing in themselves, but the knowledge of the True God was the only way to salvation. No prophet or holy teacher has the power to do good or to do evil to anybody. Everything comes from God, who alone must be depended upon for all wants. Holy men can only tell and interpret His commands. They are nothing in themselves."[22]

One God — The Unborn

Sri Guru Nanak Dev was aware that owing to the usual tendency of deifying men-of-God and founders of new creeds, efforts would be made to deify him also and to regard him as God or His incarnation. He, therefore, stressed repeatedly that God is One, only One. He is unborn and all the supposed seers, *avtaars* and prophets are insignificant in the context of the Supreme Reality :

> There is but one True Lord in the whole universe.
>
> There is no other God, besides Him.[23]
>
> God is the Sole Spouse. All other beings are His brides.[24]

Verily, he considered himself too as one of the innumerable 'brides' of that only 'Spouse'. All his hymns are, mostly, addressed to Him as such. He also asserted repeatedly :

> My Lord is one, One and Sole, the Only One, brother ![25]
>
> The transcendental Supreme Being, the Supreme Lord is the One,
>
> Whom Nanak has known as his Preceptor.[26]

How can a 'servant', a devoted and dedicated 'servant' of God – like Nanak, think of usurping that place of his Master who is also the Supreme Master of the entire universe ? He rather calls himself His 'slave', just *one* of His countless slaves, though a lucky one :

> I am a bought bond-slave of the Lord and my name is 'the fortunate one'. I was sold
>
> in the market at His bidding and now I go the way He bids.[27]

Yes, he was 'fortunate' because he was accepted by the Supreme Lord Himself as

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His own 'slave'. Besides that, he himself claimed at various places in his own writings, to be a 'bard' or a 'minstrel' of God, the only True Lord. While doing so, he had, as usual, been quite humble and unpretentious : "I am God's minstrel of low caste..."[28]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev also mentioned himself as a 'poet' at two other places; and that too without any sense of pride or self-praise :

> God Himself does everything, He Himself causes others to do whatever He wills. He also knows everything, so says Nanak, the poet of the Lord.[29]

And :

> My breath, flesh and soul — all are Yours, O Lord ! To me You are extremely dear; O You, the True Provider of all ! So says Nanak, the poet of Your threshold.[30]

At times, he also calls himself a 'merchant' of God :

> I am a merchant of God, the All-Pervading Lord; and deal only in the merchandise of His Name.[31]

At other times, he calls himself a 'beggar', just a beggar of His kind vision, His benevolent look, at His gracious gate :

> With my hands as the begging-bowl, I hunger for nothing but Thy sight which I beg, day after day, at Thy door. Bless me Lord ! With Your gracious sight, for which I always yearn. I call as a beggar at Thy door, pray dole out this charity to me.[32]

Moreover, all that Sri Guru Nanak Dev ever thought or uttered, he did that in the Name of God. He states, speaking as witness to revelation, in verses such as this :

> I spoke only what You, O God, enabled me to speak.[33]
>
> As the Word of the Lord comes to me, so I make it known, O Lalo ![34]
>
> I know not myself what to say.
> I have communicated only the command of God.[35]

A man so intensely devoted to God cannot ever pretend to be God or God-incarnate. A soul so dedicated to Him can be misunderstood as proclaiming himself to be anything but a 'man' only by those who are out to distort his creed. He rather consistently and scrupulously avoided to claim any Divinity and Godhead for himself; and even went to the extent of proclaiming :

> Listen, Bharthari ! Nanak states this after due pondering, the immaculate Name of God alone is my sole support.[36]
>
> By uttering the Name of God, I live, by forgetting it, I die.[37]

On the other hand, all that he confidently and consistently claimed for himself, was that he was a God-obeying, God-imbued, God-intoxicated man :

> Your fear, O God ! is my hemp drug, and my mind is the pouch (which holds it); I have turned mad with this infatuation and have become an anchorite.[38]

Explaining that, too, he made it more than clear that :

> He, indeed, is truly infatuated (with God) who holds the Lord dear, considers himself as unworthy, and the rest of the world as good.[39]

He also stated that he was a man commissioned and blessed by God with His service. While describing his first audience with the Supreme Lord, he sang out :

> I was a 'bard' out of work. God blessed me with His service and commanded me to

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sing His praises night and day. He summoned me to His Eternal Mansion, bestowed on me the robe of holy laudation and feasted me on the holy ambrosial *Naam*. By singing out the Revealed Word, I, the bard, spread the glory of God. By praising the Eternal Truth I have attained to the Perfect Lord.[40]

Enlightenment

The earliest available record of this historic event of enlightenment and divine assignment, says :

> Baba first received grace at the Divine Court and engaged himself in deep and austere meditation. To his great good fortune, he was granted approval and goodwill of the Lord. He was admitted to the Realm of Truth and received from there the robe of honour and gift of the Name Divine and sweet humility. From there he contemplated upon the state of the world and saw the whole earth ablaze in agony. There was no guide or teacher and a chaotic darkness prevailed all around. All humanity was groaning in suffering. The Baba then donning the garb of a monk and laying down the path of true renunciation, set out for the reformation of the world and the redemption of the humankind.[41]

Nanak Nirankari

Sri Guru Nanak Dev used two very typical and expressive names for God, viz., *Kartar* and *Nirankar*, while invoking His grace for the deliverance of humanity from such a deadly situation. As stated earlier : *Tu hi hai Nirankar Kartar, Nanak banda Téra* — "You alone, O Lord ! Are the Incorporeal Creator; Nanak is just a slave of Yours," was the leitmotif of his life.

The usual form and phrase of his blessing for all those who met him pleasantly or even abused him for his revolutionary thoughts, deeds or pronouncements, was, *Tainu Kartar chit avé* — May you ever remember the Creator!

He founded a town and named it Kartarpur (the abode of the Creator), which became his final earthly home during the last and the most momentous phase of his life. This characteristic epithet became so popular that, according to Maubid Zulfiqar Ardistani (Mohsin Fani), (1615-1670 CE), the first non-Sikh contemporary writer on Sikhism, his sons and disciples came to be known as ਕਰਤਾਰੀ (*Kartari*), that is, the worshippers of ਕਰਤਾਰ (*Kartar*), the Creator.[42]

The epithet *Nirankar* too was so frequently used by him that its continuous utterance resounded all around and became his surname in its derivative form, *Nirankari* (from *Nirankar*).[43] So much so that the Guru came to be known as '*Nanak Nirankari*', that is, Nanak who is one with the Formless One. The following dialogue, found recorded in Persian and said to have taken place between him and the famous Muslim *faqir* Ali Yar, at Kandahar in Afghanistan, is quite revealing in this respect and goes a long way to show Sri Guru Nanak Dev's relationship with God and his position as His messenger:

> Ali Yar : O Darvesh ! Where have you come from and what is your name ?

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Sri Guru Nanak Dev : I have come from Panjab, the Land of Five Rivers, and my name is Nanak Nirankari.

Ali Yar : I have not understood the meaning of the word *Nirankari*.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev : *Nirankar* is the name of God. *Nirankari* means one who belongs to Him. Being one of God's own men and associated with Him as such, I am being called so.

Ali Yar : Who is your guide and teacher ?

Sri Guru Nanak Dev : God, our sole Creator.

Ali Yar : How have you attained to God ?

Sri Guru Nanak Dev : By subduing my ego and by dwelling on nothing but God.[44]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev did not stop just there. He not only asserted the Oneness of God and his own relation with Him on the man-and-master level, but also abhorred the very idea of His supposed incarnation. He opposed all those who ever claimed any Divinity or Godhead, or who had ever been made out as possessing it by their over-zealous followers. He demolished the very doctrine of divine incarnation, both by word and deed and thus, "surpassed every other reformer. No Hindu leader had shown the courage to question the correctness of this doctrine. Rama and Krishna had received the homage of everyone as Divine Beings. It was Sri Guru Nanak Dev who boldly questioned their Divinity and brought them down to the level of mortals, and declared that the Almighty who created and controlled the whole universe, could not add anything to His greatness by assuming human shape to destroy such wretches as Ravana and Kansa."[45]

There lies the distinctive superiority of Sri Guru Nanak Dev who, on the one hand, never gave utterance to the sacrilegious idea that he himself was God, and asserted on the other hand with all vehemence : "The most peculiar quality of God is that there is none other like Him. There never was, nor will ever be another."[46]

Who would misunderstand such a person and his intentions ? How could he be described as bearing a dual conception, as Archer has thought him to be, stating :

> There have been two Nanaks, the factual and the 'formless'... He was a historical person; he is also a theological construction. He is what India and the world in general think he is; he is also what Sikhs think of him — he is historic-theological to them, a real person and also a creature of religious fancy.[47]

As far as we, the Sikhs, know and believe, there is nothing 'dual', 'fanciful' or legendary about Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the man, the master and his mission. His true disciples have never considered him so; have never regarded him either God or God-incarnate, either, 'formless' or 'a creature of religious fancy' ! For them Sri Guru Nanak Dev has always been the Satguru, the true preceptor, the supreme guide, the great enlightener, the divine master who came to lead humanity from darkness to light, from evil to righteousness, from immorality to morality; by bringing to bear upon them the great force of his unique personality, moral and spiritual vision, creative

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and dynamic gospel. He came as a man, he lived as a man, and he passed away as a man; and the like of him is yet to be known to the history of humankind.

Birth

The circumstances associated with Sri Guru Nanak Dev's birth were the same as associated with the general humanity, about which he later said :

> We are conceived of flesh and born of flesh. Are the vessels of flesh.[48]

Puran Singh, the blessed bard of the Land of Five Rivers, also tells us :

> He was a child of smiles.... Whoever saw or touched him accidentally, praised God... He was... with a radiance that was new to earth. He cast a spell that none could escape. Rai Bular, the Muslim governor of the place of his birth, loved him both as a child and as a boy; the Brahmin teacher loved him. Whoever came into contact with him was irresistibly drawn to him.[49]

All this convinced his most affectionate sister that her brother was born to fulfil a definite purpose, to play a historic role. Ghulam Husain Khan writes :

> In his youth he had been remarkable for good conduct and a laudable character, as well as for the beauty of his face and the sensibleness of his repartees. Nor was he destitute of money... A divine of note, called Sayyed Hassan... conceived an affection for him and charged himself with his education. As the young man was early introduced to the knowledge... he improved so much in learning and became so fond of books that he made it a practice in his leisure hours to translate literally or virtually, as his mind prompted him, such of those maxims as made the deepest impression on his heart. This was the medium of Punjabi, his mother tongue.[50]

Capt. J.D. Cunningham also says :

> "Nanak appears to have been naturally of a pious disposition and of a reflecting mind, and there is reason to believe that in his youth he made himself familiar with the popular creeds both of the Mohammedans and Hindus, and that he gained a general knowledge of the Koran and of the Brahminical *Shastras*."[51]

Dr Anil Chandra Banerjee :

> Some of his compositions, for instance *Jap*, *Asa di Var*, *Siddh-Gost* and *Onkar*, reveal much more than a general knowledge of scriptures. His reference to ancient writers and classical stories and his philosophical discourses with religious teachers of different sects indicate his profound grasp of religious problems. Such grasp indicates actual study of religious literature; it could hardly be acquired by mere oral discourses with saints and mendicants at various places during his travels. It is not too much to assume that the foundations of such knowledge were laid in his early years at Talwandi.[52]

Janamsakhis

The *Janamsakhis* state that while living at Sultanpur Lodhi, Guru Baba Nanak was escorted to the presence of the Supreme Lord who gave him a bowl of nectar, blessed him with the Word Divine, imparted to him a true vision of life's purpose, and commanded him to go back to the world and preach the glory of *Naam* of the True

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One :

As willed by the Supreme Lord, a bowl, filled with nectar, was given to Baba Nanak. God commanded : 'Nanak, it is not nectar. This is the cup of *Naam*. Drink it.' Then Sri Guru Nanak Dev made salutation and drank it. The Lord in His mercy said, 'Nanak, I am with you, I have blessed and exalted you, and shall bless whoever will remember you. Go into the world, rejoice in *Naam* and teach others to do so. Be not sullied by the ways of the world. Let your life be one of devotion to *Naam*, charity to others, purity of mind and body, service of mankind and contemplation of God. I have bestowed upon you the gift of *Naam*. Let this be your calling and the mission of your life.' Then Sri Guru Nanak Dev made the salutation and stood up. Then came another command and God so willed to ask, 'Nanak ! what do you think about the glory of *Naam* ?' Sri Guru Nanak Dev, then sang :

"Were I to live for million upon million years,
and could subsist alone on air for nourishment;
Were I to dwell for meditation in a cave,
where I could see neither sun nor the moon;
Where even a wink of sleep,
never visit me even in thought.
I would still not be able to measure Your greatness,
and express the glory of Your *Naam* !...
Had there been tons upon tons of paper,
and had I due devotion to read and write on it;
Were the ink never to fail me,
and I could write with the speed of the wind;
I, Nanak, would still not be able to measure
Your greatness and express the glory of Your Name."[53]

Order of the Lord came again : 'Nanak, whoever shall be blessed by your gracious glance, shall also be blessed by My gracious glance. Whoever shall be blessed with your benevolence, shall also be blessed by My benevolence. My Name is *Parbrahm-Parmesar* (the Supreme Lord, that is, the Almighty God). Your name is *Guru Parmesar*.' Then Sri Guru Nanak Dev bowed at His feet. Then a robe of honour was conferred upon him at the Heavenly Court.[54]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev's interview with God, the dialogue that ensued at the Divine Court and the Divine Commission given to him have also been recorded by Bhai Nand Lal Goya :

The Supreme Lord spoke thus to Sri Guru Nanak Dev after bestowing upon him His immense grace. Sri Guru Nanak Dev said, 'I am Your slave, Your humblest servant, and the dust of the feet of all Your creatures.' God repeated His blessings and said : 'I abide in you and there is none else like you. I do whatever I wish to do and therein lies Law and Justice. Go, reveal the real Path to humanity and sanctify all with My Laudation. I shall be your refuge and help at all places, on all occasions. He who will understand your greatness and shall learn from you about My glory will sing My praise through heart

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and soul. Show mankind the Way to Me so that they could comprehend what I say. Without true knowledge of My Existence and Power, humanity wanders in darkness and tyranny reigns supreme. Respond to its call and reveal My Light to them so that I could enlighten them. Go, point out the True Path to them, I will bless all true seekers with Light and Wisdom. I have created you from My Own Being for carrying the torch of My Light and Truth all over the world, for dispelling from their minds all thoughts of any other besides Me, and for telling right path to the misguided humanity.'

Sri Guru Nanak Dev submitted in all humility :

'How am I worthy and equal to carry this great mission of changing the outlook and condition of all mankind ? I am but Your humble creature, how shall I be able to carry Your Infinite Light and Wisdom to the whole world ? But I humbly bow to Your command and will carry it out with all my heart and soul, and will never forget Your Word even for a moment. You, O Lord, are the Guide and Saviour of all, and You alone are capable of changing the outlook of each and everyone.'[55]

It was in that very Sultanpur that after his direct communion with God "Nanak was no more his old self. He was altogether a changed man, there was divine light in his eyes and his face was resplendent. People flocked to have a look at him. Nanak wouldn't speak to anybody. He was in a trance."[56]

To the utter amazement of all, he came out suddenly with his historic trumpet-blast and shook the entire surroundings with this curious, revolutionary and provocative pronouncement : "There is neither any Hindu, nor a Mussalman."[57] It was, in fact, "a fit formula for the commencement of his mission, which was to reconcile the two warring communities of India into one brotherhood by showing them how they had fallen from their high ideals and had forgotten God, their common Father."[58] And he uttered that in a sort of ecstasy.

He was no more Nanak, a dreamy-eyed youth from Talwandi. He was Sri Guru Nanak Dev, a messenger of God, ordained to propagate His Name and the virtues of truthfulness and clean living.[59]

Yes, he had been proclaimed by the Divine Guru, the Enlightener of humanity, charged by God Himself to enlighten the whole world with the truth of the Ultimate Reality.

Here it was (at Sultanpur) that the gentle Nanak preached his marvellous love for the world. Here it was that his broad heart was opened, and his arms outstretched to embrace the whole world, not only of Hindus but of Mohammedans too.[60]

From here he started on his historic tours, spread over a long period of about twenty years, and directed towards east, south, north and west.

City of God

The man in Sri Guru Nanak Dev did not rest even on his return home after such extensive and arduous journeys. This was the last phase of his life. It "combined a life of disciplined devotion with worldly activities, set in the context of normal family

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life and regular *satsang*"[61] as recorded by Bhai Gurdas :

> The Guru uttered the revealed Word, dispersing light and dispelling darkness. Learned discourses used to be held, and the singing of the divine Word resounded. *So Dar* and *Aarti* were recited in the evening and the *Jap* was recited in the morning.[62]

"In the trackless world of that time, the old Father of his people travelled on foot. The Afghan and the Baloch, the Turk and the Tartar, the Sufi and the Brahmin, the fair and the dark races mingled in his great heart. The disciples, both men and women, came from all directions and took part freely in the songs of the Guru."[63] This was so because, "participation in religious and other activity on equal, community terms was a vital feature of the style of life evolving at Kartarpur."[64]

The Guru's "precept and example" became firmly embedded in the society that was being reared there. Thus, a fraternity with an intensely religious and social outlook grew out of the truths Sri Guru Nanak Dev preached. Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) became the centre to which the adherents repaired to seek his blessings and reaffirm their duty.

Bhai Lehna

It was here at Kartarpur that Lehna (1504-1552 CE), the flame-worshipper, came to Sri Guru Nanak Dev just by chance. He was so charmed by the Guru's person, and so impressed with his piety, glory, teachings and searching wisdom as well as the wonderful spirit which surrounded Kartarpur, that he never looked back. He gave himself to the Guru with his whole heart, and began to serve him day and night.

> Beyond all expression was the affection on each side between Lehna and Sri Guru Nanak Dev. The heights Buddha attained by his mighty struggle Lehna attained through love... Nanak in this divine statue of love, chiselled his own image.[65]

Feeling his own end drawing near and considering him the most devoted and deserving of his disciples, he renamed him (Lehna) as Angad ("part of his own person"),[66] and installed him his successor to guruship, in preference to either of his sons who felt very unhappy on having been deprived of their right of succession. Sri Guru Nanak Dev explained his choice thus :

> Hereditary privilege is not what makes a Guru; the one who deserves it the most shall be chosen.[67]

The near contemporary bards, Satta and Balwand, tell us in their Coronation Ode that :

> It was when Lehna was found true and pure, he was consecrated and installed on the throne to continue his mission, disseminate his gospel and consolidate the community... ... the mode of life and the light of Angad were the same as those of his Master, Nanak. The Master had only changed his visible form.[68]

According to Bhai Gurdas :

> Sri Guru Nanak Dev installed Lehna as Guru during his own lifetime, and put the umbrella of Guruship over his head. Imparting his own light to Lehna, Sri Guru

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> Nanak Dev changed his own form ... Changing his own body, he made Lehna's body his own.[69]

Maubid Zulfiqar Ardistani similarly tells us that :

> When Nanak cast off his body, he absorbed himself in Angad, his deeply devoted disciple. So Guru Angad was Nanak himself.[70]

According to Sri Guru Gobind Singh :

> Sri Guru Nanak Dev assumed the body of Angad. To spread *dharam* in this world.[71]

Thus, Sri Guru Angad Dev became Nanak himself.

The Last Days

We do not exactly know how the Guru spent his last days. According to the *Puratan Janamsakhi*, just before he breathed his last the Guru sang the following *slok* from *Jap (ji)* :

> Air is the Guru, water the father and the vast earth is the mother of all. Day and night are the two nurses in whose lap sports all creation. Our merits and demerits shall be judged in the presence of the righteous Judge. We shall be near or far from God by virtue of our own deeds. The toil of those will be fruitful, who have meditated on the Name of God. Their faces will radiate glory, says Nanak, and many shall get liberation alongwith them.[72]

Singing thus the Word and praise of the Lord up to the last moment of his stay on earth and covering himself with a sheet, the man in Sri Guru Nanak Dev departed the body and returned to his Master "the Beneficent Lord, who had sent him here in response to the wail of the suffering humanity and for the redemption of the Dark Age".

According to Sri Guru Arjun Dev:

> The light thus merged into Light, as into the sun the ray is absorbed and the man was fulfilled[73]

The Guru breathed his last on *Asu Vadi* 10, *Sammat* 1596 BK, corresponding to September 7, 1539 CE.[74]

A dispute arose among his followers about the disposal of his earthly remains. The Hindus as well as the Muslims claimed the Guru as their own and insisted on cremating / burying him according to their respective customs. *Janamsakhi* records :

> Then Muslims started saying, 'We will bury him.' And the Hindus started saying, 'We will cremate him.'[75]

And they both, imbued with immense affection and reverence for the departed Master, satisfied themselves by raising, in their own way, two shrines on the bank of the Ravi in his memory with a common wall between them.[76]

Mentioning the pervasive influence of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's personality among his followers through the successor Guru, Bhai Balwand and Bhai Satta state :

> Nanak's proclamation about Lehna's installation is now spread. But the same light permeates him (Lehna) and the same praxis runs through. He is the same and has only changed his bodily frame.[77]

That Sri Guru Nanak Dev lived and preached all his life in utter humility is

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indicated in *Gurbani* at various places :

> So thinks and says Nanak, the lowliest of the lowly.[78]
>
> The lowest among the low-caste; those still lower and condemned —
> Nanak is by their side; He envies not the great of the world.[79]
>
> Neither am I continent nor virtuous or with learning endowed —
> In foolish, thoughtless ways is my life passed.
> Prayeth Nanak : May I be granted shelter with such,
> As of Thee are not forgetful.[80]
>
> As we lack merit, so do others. Hence, no one is altogether meritless.[81]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev was sensitive and kind hearted to such an extent that imbued with unbounded love and deep compassion for humankind, he burst out on realising so acutely its distress and helplessness on account of Babar's terrible onslaught on Saidpur in 1520 CE, and could not resist asking God :

> When the people were tortured and killed so ruthlessly and they shrieked so loudly in pain; did You not feel any pity for them, O Lord ?[82]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev felt the same love and compassion for animal life, too. Who could resist the unpretentious, intensely loving, humane and sympathetic manner of such an enlightened man !

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Dev Govind Roop

Bhai Gurdas has given an excellent graphic account of his magnetic personality. He says :

> At his lion-like roar the deer-like ignorance fled in panic ... Wheresoever he set his foot, centres of worship were set up... The 84 *Siddhas*, Gorakh and others at Mount Sumér, wondered in their minds on seeing him there and asked him what power had brought him to their abode ... The *Siddhas* deliberated how that young man could be brought into their Order as such a one would enlighten and glorify their creed. The *Satguru* was a great person, who could stand upto the grandeur of his personality ? ... He rather overcame them by virtue of the Word Divine, and distinguished his own path from that of the *Siddhas*.[83]

In view of such spiritual triumphs, Bhat Kalsahar, another near contemporary whose *swaiyyé* are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, has called him Guru of the Gurus or Supreme Preceptor, and has stated :

> I sing the laudation of the Supreme Preceptor, who is the ocean of bliss, eraser of sins and pool of the Divine Word. Says the bard Kalh, I sing the noble praises of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, who has attained unto *Raj-yog*.[84]

Addressing the Guru in another stanza, he says :

> In the Kali age you were verily Nanak and was known too as Angad and Amardas. The Primeval Lord had declared, 'Sri Guru Nanak Dev's rule shall be immutable and eternal.'[85]

According to Sujan Rai Bhandari, a learned contemporary of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 CE), who completed his Persian chronicle, *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh*, in 1696 CE :

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> Sri Guru Nanak Dev was the chosen man of the world... During his time, he was the leader of the caravan on the Path of Truth, a torch-bearer on the way of real religion (or unquestioning obedience to the Lord), a manifestor of the splendour of Divine Light and a spectator of the dawn of Divine mysteries. In his verses in the subcontinental vernacular, he has inculcated in explicit language and with brilliant similes, the reality of God, His omnipotence and absolute Unity.[86]

Describing the loftiness of his personality, its lasting impact and continuing influence on the people who pinned their faith in him, he observed a century and a half after his death :

> Most of the disciples and devotees of Baba Nanak are men of real attainments, of God-fearing saintliness, advanced in meditation and of accepted prayer in the court of the Lord. The worship of these people consists of the study of the hymns of their Guru which they read in soft and sweet singing tones, and sing in concert to heart-melting and charming tones. Having removed all hatred from their hearts and lifting the curtain of doubt, darkness and narrowness from their minds, they look upon their relatives and others alike. Friends and foes are equal to them, and they are very faithful to their friends, and with foes they live without any quarrel with them. The faith that they have in their Guru is very rarely to be found in any other group of people. The service of strangers and travellers in the name of their Guru, which they always keep on repeating, they regard as the greatest devotion. Even if a person were to come at midnight and mention the name of Baba Nanak, however unfamiliar he may be, nay, even if he were a thief, a robber or an evil-doer, they look upon him as a brother and a friend and serve him to the best of their ability.[87]

Diwan Bhai Nand Lal Goya called Sri Guru Nanak Dev *Murshid-i-Kamal* (the Perfect Preceptor) in his Persian work, *Arz-ul-Alfaz*. He writes that *Nanak Shah* is his name and Truth is his religion, and goes on to state that "no *darvesh* like him has ever come into this world."[88]

As observed by him further in another work, *Jot Bigas* :

> Sri Guru Nanak Dev came into the world as an image of God, Who created him out of the Light of His Benevolence... He Himself called him the guide of the two worlds — a source of salvation to mankind and of mercy to the sinners .... God Himself decorated his high throne and made him worthy of every excellence.[89]

Proceeding further, he stated in *Jot Bigas* :

> Nanak is also the same, and Angad also; the virtuous and glorious Amar Das is also the same ... The same is also Guru Tegh Bahadur from whose Light Guru Gobind Singh has come. Guru Gobind Singh is the same as Sri Guru Nanak Dev. All his words are like gems and rubies.[90]

— *H.S.S.*

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ਤਉ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੀ ਕਰਉ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਮੈ ਦਰਿ ਮਾਗਤੁ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਪਾਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

33. Ibid., *Raag Wadhans*, p. 566.
ਤਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਕਹਣੁ ਜਾ ਤੂਝੈ ਕਹਾਇਆ ॥

34. Ibid., *Raag Tilang*, p. 722.
ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥

35. Ibid., *Raag Suhi*, p. 763.
ਹਉ ਆਪਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥

36. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 412.
ਸੁਣਿ ਭਰਥਰਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਹੈ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਨਾਮੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਆਧਾਰੁ ॥

37. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 9.
ਆਖਾ ਜੀਵਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਉ ॥

38. Ibid., *Raag Tilang*, p. 721.
ਭਉ ਤੇਰਾ ਭਾਂਗ, ਖਲੜੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਚੀਤੁ ॥
ਮੈ ਦੇਵਾਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਅਤੀਤੁ ॥

39. Ibid., *Raag Maru*, p. 991.
ਤਉ ਦੇਵਾਨਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥
ਮੰਦਾ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪ ਕਉ, ਅਵਰੁ ਭਲਾ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥

40. Ibid., *Raag Majh*, p. 150.

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ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ॥
ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਲਿ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਸਚਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਆਇਆ ॥ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਖਾਧਾ ਰਜਿ ਤਿਨਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਢਾਢੀ ਕਰੇ ਪਸਾਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

41. Bhai Gurdas : op. cit., 1:24.
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਬਾਬੇ ਪਾਯਾ ਬਖਸੁ ਦਰਿ ਪਿਛੋਦੇ ਫਿਰਿ ਘਾਲਿ ਕਮਾਈ ।...
ਭਾਰੀ ਕਰੀ ਤਪਸਿਆ ਵਡੇ ਭਾਗਿ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਬਣਿ ਆਈ ।
ਬਾਬਾ ਪੈਧਾ ਸਚਿ ਖੰਡਿ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਪਾਈ ।
ਬਾਬਾ ਦੇਖੈ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਧਰਿ ਜਲਤੀ ਸਭਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਵੀ ਦਿਸਿ ਆਈ ।
ਬਾਝੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਬਾਰੁ ਹੈ, ਹੈ ਹੈ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੁਣੀ ਲੁਕਾਈ ।
ਬਾਬੇ ਭੇਖ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਦੀ ਰੀਤਿ ਚਲਾਈ ।
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"ਨਾਨਕ ! ਜਿਸੁ ਉਪਰ ਤੇਰੀ ਨਦਰ, ਤਿਸੁ ਉਪਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਨਦਰ;
ਜਿਸ ਉਪਰ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਰਮੁ, ਤਿਸ ਹੀ ਉਪਰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭੀ ਕਰਮ;
ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ, ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਂਉਂ ਗੁਰੂ-ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ।"
ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬਾ ਪੈਰੀਂ ਪਾਇਆ ।
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ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਕੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਵਟਾਇਆ ।... ...
ਕਾਇਆ ਪਲਟਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਬਣਾਇਆ ।
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ਦਿਵਸੁ ਰਾਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ ਦਾਇਆ ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤੁ ॥
ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥
ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀ, ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥
ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ, ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ, ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥
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74. Not on September 22, 1539 CE, as stated, for instance, by Bhai Karam Singh in *Gurpurb Nirnai*, Amritsar, 1912, p. 57; Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha in *Gur-Shabd Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, Patiala, 1931, p. 519; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh in *A Short History of the Sikhs*, op. cit., p. 17; Khushwant Singh in *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Princeton, 1964, p. 37; and Hari Ram Gupta in *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1984, p. 100.
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78. Ibid., *Jap*, p. 4.
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79. Ibid., *Sri Raag*, p. 15.
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ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥

80. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 357.
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ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨ ਕੀ ਸਰਣਾ ਜਿਨ ਤੂੰ ਨਾਹੀ ਵੀਸਰਿਆ ॥

81. Ibid., *Raag Suhi*, p. 728.
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82. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 360.
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83. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 1:27, 1:28 and 1:31.
ਸਿੰਘੁ ਬੁਕੇ ਮਿਰਗਾਵਲੀ ਭੰਨੀ ਜਾਇ ਨ ਧੀਰਿ ਧਰੋਆ ।
ਜਿਥੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਆਸਣੁ ਥਾਪਣਿ ਸੋਆ ।...
ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਸਿਧਿ ਗੋਰਖਾਦਿ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਗਣਤੀ ਵਰਤਾਈ ।
ਸਿਧਿ ਪੁਛਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਬਾਲਿਆ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਕਤਿ ਤੁਹਿ ਏਥੇ ਲਿਆਈ ।...
ਸਿਧੀ ਮਨੇ ਬੀਚਾਰਿਆ ਕਿਵੈ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਏ ਲੇਵੈ ਬਾਲਾ ।
ਐਸਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਲੀ ਮਹਿ ਹਮਰੇ ਪੰਥੁ ਕਰੇ ਉਜਿਆਲਾ ।...
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਧਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਕੇਹੜਾ ਝਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਝਾਲਾ ।...
ਸਬਦਿ ਜਿਤੀ ਸਿਧਿ ਮੰਡਲੀ ਕੀਤੋਸੁ ਅਪਣਾ ਪੰਥੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ ।

84. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Swaiyyé Mahlé Pehlé ké*, p. 1389.
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ਕਬਿ ਕਲ ਸੁਜਸੁ ਗਾਵਉ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੋਗੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਿਓ ॥

85. Ibid., p. 1390
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ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਰਾਜੁ ਅਬਿਚਲੁ ਅਟਲੁ ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖਿ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਓ ॥

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90. Ibid., verse nos. 23, 27-28.
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5

NANAK II — SRI GURU ANGAD DEV

Immensely pleased with Bhai Lehna for his devotion and selfless service, Sri Guru Nanak Dev blessed him with guruship, entrusting the torch of revelation to him. *Mehma Parkash* records that after the bestowal of *gurgaddi* and renaming Bhai Lehna as Sri Guru Angad Dev, Sri Guru Nanak Dev paid a visit to Khadur Sahib, the new seat of the Sikh authority. As the annals go, Sri Guru Nanak Dev, finding Sri Guru Angad Dev immersed in a state of meditation said, "You have now been commissioned to organise the *Guru Panth* and formulate its code of conduct (*maryada*)."[1] Sri Guru Angad Dev's role and responsibility as the successor to Sri Guru Nanak Dev assumes profound significance, for to him was given the stupendous task of consolidating the organisation of the new faith. Having being given the mantle of guruship, Sri Guru Angad Dev carried on the mission of the Master with diligence and devotion. However, before discussing his contribution towards the consolidation of Sikh mission, a look at his early life and the milieu under which he worked would be appropriate.

Sri Guru Angad Dev, the second Master, before assuming the mantle of Nanak, was known as Lehna. He was born on March 31, 1504 CE (*Vaisakh Vadi* 1, 1561 BK) at Sarai Naga, a village in Lakhi Jungle, later sanctified by the visit of the tenth Master, at present in the newly created district of Muktsar of the Punjab.[2] His father, Phiria Mal or Pheru, was initially a petty trader, and had risen by hard work to the status of a small-time moneylender in the area around his village. After his demise, the family shifted to Hari Ké, a village close to the river Satluj in the *pargana* of Patti. However, on account of fall in business, Bhai Lehna moved to Khadur, now a prominent village in the district of Amritsar.[3]

Bhai Lehna was married to Mata Khivi in the year 1519 CE. She was the daughter of Devi Chand, who lived in the village Sangar situated near Khadur Sahib, since blown away by the winds of transience, and now reminded only by its ruins. The couple was blessed with four children, viz., Dasu and Datu, two sons, and two daughters, Bibi Amro and Bibi Anokhi. Mata Khivi was a God-fearing lady, and devoted her time and

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energy in the service of the community, under the spiritual guidance of Sri Guru Angad Dev. Satta and Balwand in their *var* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib refer to her service in this memorable line : "Balwand says that Khivi, the Guru's wife, is a noble woman, who gives soothing, leafy shade to all."[4]

The early Sikh sources state that before coming in contact with Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Bhai Lehna was an ardent devotee of the goddess Durga.[5] He would organise *jathas* of devout Hindus of the area around Khadur to pay annual visits to Jwalamukhi, a Hindu pilgrimage centre near Kangra where flames are supposed to spring forth from the mountains.[6] Once, while he was on his way to Jwalamukhi, he heard for the first time some *faqirs* and *sanyasis* eulogizing the spiritual personality of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[7] Their remarks aroused Bhai Lehna's curiosity to know more about the Guru and his mission. Back home, he perchance met a *gursikh*, Bhai Jodha, who introduced him to the *bani* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. So profound was the impact that he became restive to have an audience with the Guru.[8] According to *Nanak Parkash* and Bhai Kahn Singh, in the year 1532 CE, while Bhai Lehna was on his way to Jwalamukhi for the annual pilgrimage, he broke his journey to pay his obeisance to the Guru at Kartarpur.[9] The meeting proved to be a turning-point in Bhai Lehna's life. Dust and cobwebs of superstitious faith on the mirror of the self were blown away, and there shone the bright light that the presence of the Master lit in his soul. He resolved to part company with the Durga worshippers and stayed back at Kartarpur to embrace the creed of the great Guru. After a few weeks' stay, on the advice of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Lehna returned to Khadur, to come back to Kartarpur Sahib for permanent stay.[10] During his stay at Kartarpur, spanning little over two years, Lehna served the Guru with utmost dedication and devotion, and proved himself to be an obedient and worthy disciple of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[11] While serving the Guru he identified himself with the Master so completely that, according to tradition, Sri Guru Nanak Dev is reported to have said, "Thou art verily *angad*, a part of my body." And thenceforth instead of Lehna, he came to be known as Angad.[12] There is no doubt he was one of the few Sikhs who happened to be with the Guru during the whole of the most eventful and significant period of his life at Kartarpur. He was instrumental in establishing the scribal tradition of *Gurbani*.[13] In fact, compilation of what had been composed and recorded by Sri Guru Nanak Dev was entrusted to Angad.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev soon saw that Bhai Lehna alone deserved to be his spiritual heir.[14] To set at rest any controversy about his successor, Sri Guru Nanak Dev during his very lifetime bestowed the guruship on Angad, which was quite amazing for the people, as it was contrary to the age-old custom of hereditary succession prevalent amongst the Hindu and the Muslim society.[15] The contemporary Sikh sources affirm that the sons of Sri Guru Nanak Dev were not favourably inclined to the nomination of Angad to guruship and turned hostile towards him.[16] Though Angad desired to serve and stay with the Guru, he was advised by the Master to leave Kartarpur and lend his radiance to Khadur, the next place of Nanak's *gaddi*.[17]

At the time of Sri Guru Angad Dev's succession to guruship in September 1539,

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Emperor Humayun had been ruling India for nearly nine years. Meanwhile, Sher Shah Suri had consolidated his position in Bihar and posed a serious threat to the Mughal hegemony over Northern India. It is a well-known fact that at that time the house of Babar was in disarray. While Humayun was busy fighting his political adversaries elsewhere, his brothers were hatching conspiracies to set him aside. Mirza Kamran, the governor of Punjab and brother of Humayun, had forcibly taken possession of greater part of the Punjab to assume the role of a *de facto* ruler of the province. He was always on the lookout to grab the seat of power at Agra. In 1540 CE, Sher Shah Suri inflicted a crushing defeat on Humayun at Kanauj, chased him up to Punjab and thereby forced him to flee to Persia for asylum. Sher Shah Suri, in his short rule introduced various administrative, judicial and agrarian reforms that overhauled the administrative machinery and promoted the welfare of the subjects.[18] However, the second Afghan Empire built by Sher Shah Suri, after the demise of the first one under the Lodhis, could not last long. On his demise in 1545 CE, civil war broke out among the Afghan nobles. Khawas Khan, the governor of Punjab, helped by discontented nobles, raised the standard of revolt. Though Islam Shah, the successor of Sher Shah Suri, was successful in defeating the rebellious Afghans in a battle near Ambala, he could not crush them completely. Consequently, Khawas Khan continued his predatory activities in Punjab till his death in 1551 CE.[19] Obviously the most significant events of this period were related to the armed struggle for supremacy between the Mughals and the Afghans, led by Humayun and Sher Shah Suri, respectively. Besides, to hatch intrigues and to raise banners of revolt by both the Mughal and the Afghan nobles had become the norm in contemporary politics with a devastating effect on the central authority. We can safely state that during the guruship of Sri Guru Angad Dev there prevailed political turmoil, anarchy and uncertainty in India in general and Punjab in particular.

On the other hand, undaunted by political disturbances in the Punjab, Sri Guru Angad Dev carried on quietly the mission of the Master. An appraisal of his endeavours to consolidate the Sikh *Panth* and its achievements clearly reveals that Sri Guru Angad Dev's guruship was far from being uneventful or insignificant as has been stated by some European writers like John Malcolm.[20] The traditional Sikh sources describe that after leaving Kartarpur, Sri Guru Angad Dev remained for some time in solitude outside Khadur.[21] According to I.B. Banerjee, the purpose of this retreat was to test the devotion of the Sikhs and to bring home to the sons of Sri Guru Nanak Dev the futility of disputing their father's decision.[22] Keeping in view the fact that he took over the guruship while Sri Guru Nanak Dev was still alive, it is also a possibility that instead of acting the Guru during the lifetime of his Master, he chose a low profile for himself. Since the internal situation was far from congenial, the period of retreat might have been for introspection to find out ways and means to propagate the mission. Though Sri Chand, the elder son of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, was profoundly religious, yet he found it difficult to accept the spiritual authority of Sri Guru Angad Dev.[23] Besides controlling the original Sikh centre at Kartarpur, he built

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a shrine over the place where Sri Guru Nanak Dev's light assimilated in the Supreme light.[24] He had started preaching the teachings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in his own style, which was contrary to the spirit of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's message, for he stressed celibacy and asceticism which have no place in Sikhism. Some of the simple-minded people who still believed in the law of hereditary succession, rallied around Baba Sri Chand. To begin with, he was somewhat successful in attracting a sizeable number of people to his fold, and subsequently organised them into a separate sect known as Udasis. Above factors point to the fact that the challenge of schism to the spread of the new creed in its infancy was really serious. For Sri Guru Angad Dev to wean away the Sikhs from the influence of the Udasis and to save *Sikhi* from going into oblivion while establishing a new centre at Khadur to carry on the mission of the Master was indeed a daunting task. At the request of prominent Sikhs like Baba Budha, Sri Guru Angad Dev came out of seclusion to take his seat and propagate the Sikh mission to the people in and around Khadur.[25] The bards, Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand, have depicted the emergence of the Sikh centre at Khadur in the following words :

> The holy Preceptor Pheru's son, then in Khadur took abode.
> With thee abide contemplation, austerity, self-restraint —
> The rest in great pride are involved.
> Greed ruins mankind as weeds water.
> At the Master's portal rains down illumination from divine light.
> Thou art the ocean of cool poise unfathomable.
> The treasure of the Name, bringer of Nine Treasures, in thee is stored.
> Whoever traduces thee, pulverized must be.
> To the dwellers of the world only objects lying near are visible —
> Thou dost behold also what lies far in the thereafter.
> The holy Preceptor, Pheru's son, then in Khadur took abode.[26]

In Sikh history, there is a strong tradition that while Humayun was on his way to Persia, he passed through Punjab and waited on Sri Guru Angad Dev at Khadur to solicit his blessings for the recovery of the royal throne at Agra.[27] Without assigning any reason, I.B. Banerjee dismisses it as an account of doubtful veracity.[28] However, the route taken by Humayun and the customs of medieval India provide the confirmation of the Sikh account. In the wake of a political crisis, the visit to pay respect or to enlist the moral support of saints by fugitive kings or princes was a common practice. Similarly, examples of the men-of-God playing the role of peace-makers also abound.[29] Therefore, when Humayun was passing through a serious political crisis in his career, a visit to a religious personality like Sri Guru Angad Dev does make sense, especially in the light of the prevailing customs. According to the Sikhs sources, Sri Guru Angad Dev told the emperor that he had lost the throne because of injustice and misrule in his kingdom. It seems that Sri Guru Angad Dev was not satisfied with the administration of Mirza Kamran, the *de facto* Mughal ruler of Punjab. Probably that was the reason that Sri Guru Angad Dev felt the need to

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advise Humayun to dispense justice as it was the *raison d'etre* of an ideal ruler according to the Sikh tenets.[30] Nevertheless, the meeting between Sri Guru Angad Dev and Humayun seems to have had little effect on the course of contemporary politics. The activities of the second Master do not suggest active role in the political situation that prevailed in the region at that time.

After assuming the guruship, Sri Guru Angad Dev remained a keen observer of the Mughal as well as the Afghan rule in India. A careful analysis of his hymns reveals that, like the first Nanak, he did not hesitate to comment on the prevailing moral and spiritual degeneration. His deep concern at the state of affairs has been reflected in one of his compositions :

> A mendicant is given the title 'emperor'; a fool is called 'wise man';
> A blind man is called 'evaluator' — such is nature of the usual parlance.
> A mischief-monger becomes chief, and a bad woman is seated at the head.
> Saith Nanak : By the wisdom granted by the Master,
> Know such to be the way of Kalyuga. [31]

It is evident that Sri Guru Angad Dev's comment on the age brings to the fore the absence of truth and justice in social and political life. Sri Guru Angad Dev not only continued to nourish the institutions inherited from the first Nanak, but also put into practice some additional features of *Sikhi* which played a pivotal role in its transmission to the succeeding generations. His outstanding contribution in this regard lies in the fact that he standardized the Gurmukhi script.[32] He popularized its use by scribing the *pothis* of *Gurbani* in this standardized script for circulation among the Sikh masses. The use of Gurmukhi with its definite features marks a watershed in the development of scribal tradition of the Sikh scripture. The *pothis* of *Gurbani* scribed by Sri Guru Angad Dev later on played a vital role during the compilation of the writings of the Gurus.[33] It has been aptly remarked that "the credit for initiating the work that finally led to the compilation of (Guru) *Granth Sahib* is also due to Sri Guru Angad Dev."[34] There is no denying the fact that he provided the Sikhs with their own written language which was distinct from the script of the *Vedas* and the *Quran*. It imparted a distinct identity to the Sikhs as a separate community from both the Hindus and the Muslims.[35]

Some of the Sikh chronicles state that Sri Guru Angad Dev commissioned one Pairha Mokha, a resident of Sultanpur, to record the account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's travels as it was known to Bhai Bala, who was believed to be a companion of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[36] Most scholars are of the view that the account of *Bala Janamsakhi* has no connection with the guruship of Sri Guru Angad Dev and is a work of 17-18th century while some scholars feel that the work which is known as the *Bala Janamsakhi* was corrupted by the enemies of the *Panth*, namely, the *Hindalias* or *Handalias*.[37] Sri Guru Angad Dev's *bani* provides significant insights into understanding the *bani* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[38] Its beauty lies in the fact that it not only reflects his deep understanding of the theological concerns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, but it also delineates the parameters that help in its understanding. For example — nature of

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God, world and man; God's Grace and His *Hukam* (order); place of Guru, *Naam* and *bani* in *Sikhi*; belief in concepts like, *gurmukh*, *manmukh*, true love and devotion; nature of *maya* and *haumain* (ego); dying to the lower self in order to live a life of internal purity; state of the senses while in tune with God, etc., have been explained in short, pithy verses. Similarly, the supremacy of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's worldview in relation to that of the *Vedas* and *Yoga* has been adequately emphasized. Besides, Sri Guru Angad Dev cautioned the Sikhs not to fall prey to the dispensations of the spiritually devoid leaders. Instead, he exhorted them to recognize the Master and follow His path.[39] He questioned the merit of following the clergy and the gift it claimed to give one. He says that the gift that one receives in accordance with the pleasure of his Master, is the real miracle.[40] In order to underline the idea that there is no difference between Sri Guru Nanak Dev and his successors, Sri Guru Angad Dev, while putting across his religious affirmation, did not make use of his personal name. Instead, he composed his *bani* under the name of 'Nanak'. It helped to establish the idea of unity of guruship, and thereby the spiritual authority of Sri Guru Nanak Dev was extended to Sri Guru Angad Dev and the successor Sikh Gurus.

It can be easily visualized that the pattern of religious life at Khadur was not different from that of Kartarpur, for Sri Guru Angad Dev was fully conversant with the spiritual routine at the place of the Master. It is evident from the compositions of Sri Guru Angad Dev that early morning ablution, meditation on the *Naam*, congregational worship and discussion over the precepts of *Sikhi* in the company of learned Sikhs had become a part of the Sikh way of life at Khadur as well.[41] Similarly, the contemporary as well as traditional Sikh sources affirm that *kirtan* of *Gurbani* by minstrels, and the practice of community kitchen (*langar*) had become equally popular.[42] The contemporary sources also state that Khivi, the wife of Sri Guru Angad Dev, took special care to look after the needs of the Sikhs. There was no dearth of charity, still Sri Guru Angad Dev lived on coarse food earned by him by twisting strings of *munj*.[43] The religio-spiritual scenario at Khadur under the tutelage of Sri Guru Angad Dev, has been well depicted by Bhai Satta and Rai Balwand :

> The proclamation concerning Lehna by Nanak has now spread :
> The same light permeated him, the same praxis —
> Only the Master his visible form has changed.
> Over Lehna's head waved the immaculate umbrella,
> As in the Guru's home on throne he was seated;
> Doing as by the Master instructed, licking the tasteless slab
> of seeking union with the Lord.
> The feeding centre of the Master's Divine Word was operative.
> Whose provision diminution saw never.
> What the Master donated he spent.
> Consuming it himself and distributing in charity the rest.
> As is landed the Lord, light from heaven and from
> the sun's disc is scattered below... ...

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Guru Angad's proclamation was made, that the eternal
Creator confirmed.
Nanak changing his aspect occupied the throne spread
in hundreds of branches.
At the Master's door, the followers stand serving him,
Their rust of impurity rubbed off.
The hermit at the Master's door, by utterance of the Name Divine
is made radiant.
Says Balwand, the bard : Khivi, noble soul,
Was like the tree with shade of thick leaves.
In her kitchen was distributed rich fare, *khir* enriched with *ghéo*
tasting like *amrit* elixir.
The faces of Master's disciples became radiant;
The egoists shrunk like straw.
Guru Angad, acting heroically, with the Master found approval.
Mother Khivi's wedded lord carried the earth's burden."[44]

The Sikh accounts also mention that Sri Guru Angad Dev took keen interest in imparting the knowledge of Gurmukhi and *Gurbani* to children. In this way, the *dharamsal* at Khadur, besides serving the purpose of a religious establishment, was developing into a Sikh centre of learning as well. Obviously, it was a unique experience, for, unlike the *pathshalas* and *maqtabs* of those days, it was open to all those interested to learn *Gurbani* without any discrimination. We also find that Sri Guru Angad Dev was very fond of seeing children at play in the courtyard of *dharamsal* at Khadur.[45] He encouraged the Sikhs to participate in rural games especially wrestling, and for that he had an arena (*mal akhara*) built at Khadur where wrestling bouts were organised.[46] It has rightly been pointed out that the tradition of martial and other games involving physical prowess and agility made it easy for the successor Gurus to raise troops of able-bodied men from among the Sikhs.[47] The foundation of Goindwal as a Sikh centre by (Guru) Amar Das, which was to play an important role in the development of Sikhism at a later stage, was also due to the initiative of Sri Guru Angad Dev.[48] The appeal of Sikhism was not confined to a particular section of society. According to Bhai Gurdas, those who had come into the fold of Sikhism at the behest of the second Master, belonged to various strata of society.[49]

Taking into account all these factors, one can firmly state that the impression that Sri Guru Angad Dev's pontificate was more or less uneventful or insignificant is ill-founded. On the contrary, here we can identify the saplings of *Sikhi* that grew with subsequent Gurus into a rich and vast foliage and lent a distinct identity to it (*Sikhi*) on this vast subcontinent.[50] But all the achievements of Sri Guru Angad Dev were not without struggle. He had the onerous task of devising ways and means to strengthen and spread the nascent faith. It was to win unwilling and stony hearts and to tell the big wide world that Sikhism was founded on humility.

We are also told that when Sri Guru Angad Dev's preaching caught the popular

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imagination and held its sway over the people of Khadur, he had to face opposition from a local religious leader, the *tapa* (ascetic).[51] He did not like the growing popularity of *Sikhi* among the people of the area. According to the Sikh sources, he blamed Sri Guru Angad Dev's mission for the drought that had beset the area. He instigated the peasants to drive away the Guru from Khadur so that the rain god could be pleased. To avoid any untoward situation Sri Guru Angad Dev voluntarily retired to Khan Raizada, a nearby village. However, the peasants soon realized their folly and gave a rude rebuff to the hypocritical *tapa*. Thereafter, on their request, Sri Guru Angad Dev returned to Khadur to continue his mission without any external interference.

The activities of Sri Guru Angad Dev suggest that throughout his guruship he remained busy in his missionary work. Unlike his Master, Sri Guru Nanak Dev, he did not itinerate to take the mission of Sikhism to the people of distant lands. Goindwal, a Sikh centre of significance, came up during this period. Similarly most of the prominent Sikhs who had joined the ranks of Sikhism belonged to the neighbouring areas. Having guided the Sikh mission with utmost care and dedication, Sri Guru Angad Dev, like his Master, thought it prudent to nominate his successor (Guru) Amar Das, during his very lifetime, before his death on March 29, 1552 CE.

— *B.S.*

Notes and References

1. Bhalla, Sarup Das : *Mehma Parkash*, Vol. I, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1971, p. 326.
2. There is a lot of confusion amongst the Sikh sources about the name of birthplace of the second Nanak. Some chroniclers call it "Matté di Saran" whereas other sources suggest "Hari Ké". However, the shrine commemorating his birthplace is found at Sarai Naga. See :
   Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : *Bansawali Nama*, *PARKIII*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, p. 16.
   Randhir Singh : *Gurparnalian*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1977, pp. 105, 123, 144, 171, 214.
   Khazan Singh : *History of the Sikh Religion*, reprint, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1977, p. 111.
   Macauliffe, M.A. : *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. II, Oxford, 1909, p. 1.
   Banerjee, I.B. : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1936, p. 148.
3. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 16; Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Amritsar, 1914, p. 285.
4. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Ramkali*, p. 967.
   ਬਲਵੰਡ ਖੀਵੀ ਨੇਕ ਜਨ ਜਿਸੁ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਛਾਉ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਲੀ ॥
5. *Puratan Janamsakhi*, ed. Bhai Vir Singh, p. 106.
6. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 16.
7. Ibid., p. 16.
8. *Puratan Janamsakhi*, p. 106; Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 285.
9. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 17.
   However, the *Puratan Janamsakhi* reveals that Lehna was introduced to Sri Guru Nanak Dev by a Sikh living at Khadur. The later sources make reference to his name as Bhai Jodha (see *Puratan Janamsakhi*, p. 106; Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 2). For the year of first meeting of Bhai Lehna see *Nanak Parkash* and *Mahan Kosh*.
10. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., holds that Lehna stayed at Kartarpur on the occasion only for four days. p. 17.

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11. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 14.
12. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 9; for the service rendered by Bhai Lehna confer various *Janamsakhi* traditions.
13. Harji *Janamsakhi* mentions that it was (Guru) Angad who on the direction of Sri Guru Nanak Dev prepared the final text of *Jap (ji)* (see *Janamsakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Dev Ji*, Vol. II, pp. 249-250).
14. For the series of trials conducted by Sri Guru Nanak Dev to test the dedication and commitment of his close followers, confer various *Janamsakhi* traditions. Also see *Parchian Sewa Das*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1978, pp. 55-64.
15. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Ramkali*, pp. 966-967.
    ਗੁਰਿ ਚੇਲੇ ਰਹਿਰਾਸਿ ਕੀਈ ਨਾਨਕਿ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਥੀਵਦੈ ॥
    ਸਹਿ ਟਿਕਾ ਦਿਤੋਸੁ ਜੀਵਦੈ ॥ ... ...
    ਹੋਰਿਓ ਰੀਗ ਵਹਾਈਐ ਦੁਨਿਆਈ ਆਥੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਓਨੁ ॥
    ਨਾਨਕ ਈਸਰਿ ਜਗਨਾਥਿ ਉਚਹਦੀ ਵੈਣੁ ਵਿਰਿਕਿਓਨੁ ॥ ... ...
    ਸਿਖਾ ਪੁਤ੍ਰਾ ਘੋਖਿ ਕੈ ਸਭ ਉਮਤਿ ਵੇਖਹੁ ਜਿ ਕਿਓਨੁ ॥
    ਜਾ ਸੁਧੋਸੁ ਤਾ ਲਹਣਾ ਟਿਕਿਓਨੁ ॥
    Also see Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 1:45.
16. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Ramkali*, p. 967.
    ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਕਉਲੁ ਨ ਪਾਲਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਪੀਰਹੁ ਕੰਨ ਮੁਰਟੀਐ ॥
    ਦਿਲਿ ਖੋਟੈ ਆਕੀ ਫਿਰਨਿ ਬੰਨ ਭਾਰੁ ਉਚਾਇਨਿ ਛਟੀਐ ॥
17. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 1:46.
    ਸੋ ਟਿਕਾ ਸੋ ਛਤ੍ਰ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਈ ਸਚਾ ਤਖਤੁ ਟਿਕਾਈ ।
    ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੰਦੀ ਮੁਹਰਿ ਹਥਿ ਗੁਰ ਅੰਗਦ ਦੀ ਦੋਹੀ ਫਿਰਾਈ ।
    ਦਿਤਾ ਛੋੜਿ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਪੁਰੁ ਬੈਠਿ ਖਡੂਰੇ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗਾਈ ।
18. For Sher Shah Suri's reforms, see Elliot and Dowson : *History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, Vol. IV, pp. 409, 413, 417-18, 429, 433.
19. Erskine, William : *The History of India : The House of Taimur*, pp. 457-458.
    Siddiqi, I.H. : *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism in India*, p. 75.
20. Malcolm, John : *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 20.
21. It is said that Sri Guru Angad Dev remained confined in the house of a Sikh whose name has been described variously. See Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 15; Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 3; Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 293; Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. II, 12.
22. Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 151.
23. See above, reference no. 16.
24. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 26:33.
    ਬਾਲ ਜਤੀ ਹੈ ਸਿਰੀਚੰਦੁ ਬਾਬਾਣਾ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ।
25. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 4-6.
26. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Ramkali*, p. 967.
    ਫੇਰਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ ਫੇਰੁਆਣਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਖਾਡੂਰੁ ॥
    ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਤੁਧੁ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੁਚੁ ਗਰੂਰੁ ॥
    ਲਬੁ ਵਿਣਾਹੇ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੂਰੁ ॥
    ਵਰ੍ਹਿਐ ਦਰਗਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਨੂਰੁ ॥
    ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁ ਹਾਥ ਨ ਲਭਈ ਤੂੰ ਓਹੁ ਠਰੂਰ ॥
    ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਹੈ ਤੁਧੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਭਰਪੂਰੁ ॥
    ਨਿੰਦਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਵੰਞੈ ਚੂਰੁ ॥
    ਨੇੜੈ ਦਿਸੈ ਮਾਤ ਲੋਕ ਤੁਧੁ ਸੁਝੈ ਦੂਰੁ ॥
    ਫੇਰਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ ਫੇਰੁਆਣਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਖਾਡੂਰੁ ॥

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27. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 23; Santokh Singh, Bhai : *Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth* (ed. Vir Singh, Bhai), pp. 1342-1351; Gian Singh, Giani : *Panth Parkash*, pp. 570-571.
28. Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 151.
29. Even Emperor Humayun had requested Sheikh Khalil, a descendant of Baba Sheikh Farid of Pakpattan, to negotiate with Sher Shah Suri on his behalf. See Jauhar : *Tezkirat-ul-Waqiat or Private Memoirs of Emperor Humayun*, Eng. trans. by Major Charles Stewart, p. 17.
30. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Sarang*, p. 1240.
ਰਾਜੇ ਚੁਲੀ ਨਿਆਵ ਕੀ ਪੜਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥
31. Ibid., *Raag Mallar*, p. 1288.
ਨਾਉ ਫਕੀਰੈ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਮੂਰਖ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਨਾਉ ॥
ਅੰਧੇ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਪਾਰਖੂ ਏਵੈ ਕਰੇ ਗੁਆਉ ॥
ਇਲਤਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਚਉਧਰੀ ਕੂੜੀ ਪੂਰੇ ਥਾਉ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਏਹੁ ਨਿਆਉ ॥
32. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 10; Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 295. Some scholars like Trumpp and G.B. Singh hold that Sri Guru Angad Dev was in no way responsible for formulating the Gurmukhi script (Trumpp, Ernest : *The Adi Granth*, LXXVII; G.B. Singh : *Gurmukhi Lipi da Janam té Vikas*, pp. 109-110). On the other hand Macauliffe finds that it was not entirely a new script. Sri Guru Angad Dev adapted and modified the alphabet which already existed, and had been used by Sri Guru Nanak Dev and after refining it gave it the name of Gurmukhi (Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. II, 56). Also see Narang, G.C. : *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 28. For a discussion over the origin of Gurmukhi script, see Pritam Singh's *Gurmukhi Lipi* (ed. Randhawa, M.S.), pp. 385-389.
33. Khushwant Singh : *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Princeton and London, 1963, p. 52.
34. Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 158.
35. Khushwant Singh : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 52. Also see, Narang, G.C. : op. cit., p. 29.
36. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 10-12; Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 19; Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 295.
37. Khazan Singh : op. cit., pp. 12-13, 112; however, most of the modern scholars doubt the veracity of the *Bala Janamsakhi*. See Trumpp, Ernest : op. cit., p. V; Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. I, p. LXXIX; Historian, Karam Singh : *Katak ké Vaisakh*, p. 240; Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 60; McLeod, W.H. : *Sri Guru Nanak Dev and the Sikh Religion*, pp. 21-24.
Also see Kirpal Singh : *Janamsakhi Parampara*, pp. XVI-XXII.
38. Sri Guru Angad Dev composed 63 *sloks* which are found placed with the *pauris* of various *vars* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. See Kahn Singh, Bhai : *Mahan Kosh*, p. 437.
39. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Ramkali*, p. 954.
ਅੰਧੇ ਕੈ ਰਾਹਿ ਦਸਿਐ ਅੰਧਾ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਹੋਇ ਸੁਜਾਖਾ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਉਝੜਿ ਪਾਇ ॥
ਅੰਧੇ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜਿਨ ਮੁਖਿ ਲੋਇਣ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
ਅੰਧੇ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਖਸਮਹੁ ਘੁਥੇ ਜਾਹਿ ॥
40. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, pp. 474-475.
ਏਹਿ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਦਾਤਿ ਆਪਸ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾ ਕਰਮਾਤਿ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੁਠੈ ਜੋ ਮਿਲੈ ॥
41. Ibid., *Raag Majh*, p. 146.
ਅਠੀ ਪਹਰੀ ਅਠ ਖੰਡ ਨਾਵਾ ਖੰਡੁ ਸਰੀਰੁ ॥
ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਏਕੁ ਭਾਲਹਿ ਗੁਣੀ ਗਹੀਰੁ ॥
ਕਰਮਵੰਤੀ ਸਾਲਾਹਿਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ॥

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ਚਉਥੈ ਪਹਰਿ ਸਬਾਹ ਕੈ ਸੁਰਤਿਆ ਉਪਜੈ ਚਾਉ ॥
ਤਿਨਾ ਦਰੀਆਵਾ ਸਿਉ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਸਚਾ ਨਾਉ ॥
ਓਥੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਵੰਡੀਐ ਕਰਮੀ ਹੋਇ ਪਸਾਉ ॥
ਕੰਚਨ ਕਾਇਆ ਕਸੀਐ ਵੰਨੀ ਚੜੈ ਚੜਾਉ ॥
ਜੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਸਰਾਫ ਕੀ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ ਤਾਉ ॥
ਸਤੀ ਪਹਰੀ ਸਤੁ ਭਲਾ ਬਹੀਐ ਪੜਿਆ ਪਾਸਿ ॥
ਓਥੈ ਪਾਪੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਕੂੜੈ ਘਟੈ ਰਾਸਿ ॥
ਓਥੈ ਖੋਟੇ ਸਟੀਅਹਿ ਖਰੇ ਕੀਚਹਿ ਸਾਬਾਸਿ ॥
ਬੋਲਣੁ ਫਾਦਲੁ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਖਸਮੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

42. Ibid., *Raag Ramkali*, pp. 966-967; Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 14-15.
43. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 19.
44. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Ramkali*, pp. 966-967.
45. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 16.
46. Ibid., p. 16; also see Harbans Singh (ed.) : *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. I, p. 148.
47. Khushwant Singh : op. cit., p. 52.
48. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 60-61.
49. For the Socio-religious background of the Sikhs of Sri Guru Angad Dev, see Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 11:14-15. Also, see Vir Singh, Bhai (ed.) : *Sikhan di Bhagat Mala* (ed.), pp. 55-65.
50. Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 153.
51. Ibid., p. 25; also see Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 69-77.

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6

NANAK III — SRI GURU AMAR DAS

Introduction

Sri Guru Amar Das was the third in the apostolic succession of the Sikh Gurus. He has been described by a contemporary bard as : "In his kitchen are ever served clarified butter and flour ... ...He is firm as the mountain of Meru, never swayed by the gusts of wind."[1]

Early Life

The early history of the family of Sri Guru Amar Das is not known, except that his great-grandfather, Vishan Das, was a petty shopkeeper at village Basarke, in present-day district of Amritsar. He had a son named Harji. For some economic reasons perhaps the family shifted to Gilwali village in the same district where a son Tej Bhan (Tejo) was born in the house of Harji. Though the family had a flourishing business at Gilwali, they returned to their original home in village Basarke. Tej Bhan was married to Sulakhani (also called Lachhmi), and was blessed with four sons, the eldest among whom was Sri Guru Amar Das.[2]

About the date of birth of Sri Guru Amar Das there is a difference of opinion. Kesar Singh Chhibbar's *Bansawali Nama*, gives 1568 BK (1511 CE) as the year of birth of the Guru. Gulab Singh's *Gurparnali* gives 1536 BK, (1479 CE) (*Gurparnalian* published by Sikh History Society, Amritsar). *Gurparnalika* in *Itihasik Pattar*, Sikh History Society, Amritsar, Part I (1950) also gives 1536 BK. The date of *Jeth* 10, 1536 BK appears to be correct. Karam Singh in *Gurpurb Nirnai* (vide p. 70) confirms this date, viz., May 5, 1479 CE.

Sri Guru Amar Das grew to be a man of profound religious temperament. He was a zealous believer of Vaishnava faith, and had taken a vow to have a bath in the Ganges every year, and zealously discharged all duties of a pious Hindu. At the age of about twenty-four, he was married to Mansa Devi. The couple was blessed with two sons, Mohan and Mohri, and two daughters, Dani and Bhani.[3] Sri Guru Amar Das was fond of the society of ascetics and saints. Once on his return journey from

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his twentieth visit to the Ganges, Sri Guru Amar Das met a monk who became friendly with him, so that they cooked and took meals together. The monk one day asked him about his Guru who had taught him such wisdom and piety. Sri Guru Amar Das replied that he had no Guru. This greatly upset the monk, since he believed that he had wasted his whole life's work by having eaten from the hands of a man who had no Guru. That greatly hurt Sri Guru Amar Das also, and kindled a desire in his reflective mind to find a Guru.[4]

Bibi Amro, Guru Angad's daughter, had been married to Sri Guru Amar Das' nephew and lived in the nearby house of his brother. She used to sing *bani* of Guru Nanak in the early morning. According to Giani Gian Singh, one day Bibi Amro sang the hymn of Guru Nanak translated below :

> The self engaged in action is the paper, the mind the ink,
> On this paper are inscribed bad and good records both. ... ...
> The self turned charred iron, can again turn gold,
> Should such a Master be met.[5]

The hymn soothed the wandering mind. He asked her to take him to her father which she did and he became devotedly attached to Guru Angad. The Guru enlightened him on the futility of ritual austerities. The best austerity, he was told, was the service of humanity. In spite of his old age and very close and rather delicate kinship with the Guru, he took upon himself humblest chores and continued to serve the Guru with utmost devotion for twelve years.[6]

Blessings of Guru Angad

Sri Guru Amar Das used to bring fresh water for the Guru's bath from the river Beas a couple of miles away. One stormy dark night when Sri Guru Amar Das was carrying water, his foot slipped and he fell into the handloom pit of a weaver, but did not let the water spill. The weaver's wife heard the sound of the fall which disturbed her sleep. She cursed Sri Guru Amar Das, calling him "the homeless, shelterless and lowly." When Guru Angad came to know about this incident, he called Sri Guru Amar Das and showered generous blessings on him. Sri Guru Amar Das had demonstrated through his devotion and spirit of service the ability required for leading the Sikh *Panth*. The Guru, therefore, in spite of strong opposition from his sons, announced the ascension of Sri Guru Amar Das to the high office of Guruship in 1552 CE.[7]

Visit to Kurukshetra and Hardwar

The purpose of Sri Guru Amar Das' visit to Kurukshetra and the Ganges has been described variously. Bhai Santokh Singh and Macauliffe specifically mention that the visit was undertaken at the instance of Akbar, the Mughal emperor, who is alleged to have persuaded the Guru to go to the places of Hindu pilgrimage in order to satisfy his detractors who had complained to the emperor against the Guru.[8] This is highly improbable keeping in mind the sovereign character of the Sikh Gurus wherein

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they did not acknowledge the authority of any earthly king and followed only the *Hukam* of One Almighty, *Waheguru*. Fortunately, there is a hymn by the fourth Guru giving the details of the visit and its objective. It has been clearly stated therein that "the true Guru undertook this trip in order to elevate the people."[9] The route of the tours and the Guru's visit at various places have been described in that hymn as follows :

First came the holy Preceptor to Kulkhet (Kurukshetra), and was the holy occasion solemnized.
As spread the news the world over, the three worlds came to behold him :
Came the three worlds, to behold him; holy men, sages all arrived.
Those that had touch of the holy Preceptor, perfectly-endowed,
annulled were their sins.
Came in groups Yogis, unclad Jain monks, Sanyasis, followers of the six orders,
and had a dialogue with him.
First came the holy Preceptor to Kurukshetra, and was the holy occasion solemnized.
Next went the Master to Jamuna, where the Name Divine was chanted.
The tax-collectors to him came with offerings —
All those that followed the Master were allowed to pass :
Exempted were all who followed after the holy Preceptor,
as the Name Divine they uttered :
Those that tread path of the Master's Word,
the tax-gatherers ferocious as Yama approach them not.
The whole world uttered 'Guru, Guru';
those uttering the Guru's name all were exempted,
Next went the Master to Jamuna, where the Name Divine was uttered.
In the third place came the Master to the river Ganga, where happened a wonder,
The whole world by sight of the holy Master was charmed —
Not half a farthing of tax was realized :
Not half a farthing was realized by the tax-gatherers —
In wonder were they struck silent.
Said they : Brethren, from whom should we demand tax,
As the whole world after the holy Preceptor is rushing ?
The tax-gatherers after considering, thought of a clever device —
Smashing their cash-boxes they all fled.
In the third place came the Master to Ganga,
Where happened a wonder.[10]

Date of the Tour

In the above mentioned hymn of Sri Guru Ram Das, the following references help us to determine the date of tour : i) *Abhijit*, ii) Mention of tax collectors.

ABHIJIT

Abhijit has been explained by Macauliffe in a footnote in the following words :

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"The lunar month though generally considered twenty-eight days is really twenty seven days, odd hours, minutes and seconds. *Abhijit* was intercalated between 21st and 22nd asterism to adjust the difference."[11]

According to Sanskrit texts there are twenty-eight *Nakshatras*, twenty-second being *Abhijit* as calculated by Dr Balbir Singh in his article in the *Punjab Past and Present*. It was *Abhijit Nakshatra* when Sri Guru Amar Das visited Kurukshetra. *Abhijit* always occurs at the time of a solar eclipse which is always *massya*. Working on the Indian Ephemeris by Swami Kannu Pillay, we can calculate that solar eclipse occurred nineteen times during the Guruship of Sri Guru Amar Das from 1552 CE to 1574 CE. During this period of twenty two years there was solar eclipse on the following days[12] :

January 14,	1553 CE
June 18,	1555 CE
November 14,	1555 CE
May 9,	1556 CE
November 2,	1556 CE
October 22,	1557 CE
April 18,	1558 CE
February 26,	1560 CE
August 21,	1560 CE
February 14,	1561 CE
August 10,	1561 CE
December 15,	1563 CE
June 8,	1564 CE
April 9,	1567 CE
September 21,	1568 CE
February 5,	1570 CE
July 21,	1571 CE
January 15,	1572 CE
July 9,	1572 CE

According to Dr Balbir Singh, "The conjunction of the *Abhijit Nachhatra* in respect of these 19 eclipses occurred twice only. First it was on January 14, 1553 CE and secondly on January 15, 1572 CE."[13] How Dr Balbir Singh was able to find out these two dates and on what basis is not clear. However, it is learnt that Dr Balbir Singh took lot of pains to consult the experts at various places like Hardwar, etc.

MENTION OF TAX COLLECTORS

The examination of Sri Guru Ram Das' hymn referred to above indicates that the tax collector (*jagati*) did not levy tax on the Guru and his followers. According to Dr Balbir Singh, it was the pilgrimage tax. Emperor Akbar abolished pilgrimage tax in 1562-63 CE. It is, therefore, argued that Sri Guru Amar Das must have visited Hardwar earlier than 1562-63 CE, that is, the Guru's visit to Hardwar must have

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been on January 14, 1553 CE on the occasion of solar eclipse. This view, however, does not appear to be correct. The hymn of Sri Guru Ram Das has six stanzas. The first stanza mentions the Guru's visit to Kurukshetra. Here there is no mention of tax collector or tax collection. In the third stanza there is again mention of the Guru's visit to Kurukshetra but there is no reference to the tax collection. In the fourth stanza there is the mention of the river Jamuna as well as reference to the tax collector who did not demand tax from the Guru or his followers. In the fifth stanza there is mention of Guru's visit to river Ganges. There is again a reference to tax collectors/ collections. Out of respect they did not charge the tax from the Guru. Had it been the pilgrimage tax, there would have been mention of it at Kurukshetra also which was equally important a centre of pilgrimage. Bernier has mentioned pilgrimage tax at Kuruskhetra during Aurangzeb's reign. The second important consideration is — had it been a pilgrimage tax it should not have been levied at river Jamuna, which was no centre of pilgrimage. Again, there is mention of tax collection at river Ganges. Thus, it becomes clear that tax mentioned in the hymn is not a pilgrimage tax. It was a river toll tax which was charged from all those persons who crossed the river. *Ain-i-Akbari* has clearly stated it :

> The following sums are levied as river tolls. For every boat R. 1/- per *kos* at the rate of 1,000 *mans*, provided the boat and the men belong to one and the same owner. But, if the boat belongs to another man and everything in the boat to the man who hired it, the tax is R. 1/- for every 2½ *kos*. At ferry places an elephant has to pay 10 d for crossing, a laden cart 4 d, empty cart 2 d, a laden camel 1 d, unloaded camels, horses, cattle with their things 1 d. Other beasts of burden pay 1/16 d. Twenty people pay 1 d for crossing, but they are often taken *gratis*. The rule is that one half or one third of the tolls thus collected go to the state, and the balance goes to the boatman.[14]

Thus, it appears that pilgrimage tax has nothing to do with the Guru's visit on the later date, viz., January 15, 1572 CE. There are some other factors which are also in favour of the later date.

When Guru ascended *gaddi* in 1552 CE, he was faced with numerous problems created by the sons of Guru Angad Dev, the second Guru. He retreated for some months to his native village Basarke for some time. In view of all the circumstances it was not probable that the Guru would have gone to Hardwar in early 1553 CE. Hence the later date, viz., January 15, 1572 CE, appears to be more acceptable.

Founding of Goindwal and its Development

During the later phase of Guru Angad's life, one Goinda represented to the Guru that he wanted to found a village on the bank of the river Beas but had not been successful in his efforts. The Guru was moved by his request and deputed Sri Guru Amar Das, his disciple, to help found the village. Sri Guru Amar Das went with the Guru's blessings and was successful in founding the village Goindwal, which subsequently grew to be an important town.

While installing Sri Guru Amar Das as his successor in 1552 CE, Guru Angad

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advised him to settle at the newly built town. When Sri Guru Amar Das shifted to this town, all his brothers and their families also shifted from Basarke to Goindwal. The Guru's devotional life attracted people from far and near leading to scarcity of living accommodation. The Guru encourged settlers to construct houses through liberal allotment of residential plots of land. In order to provide the timber required for the the purpose of building the houses, the Guru sent his nephew Sawan Mal, who was known for his piety, to go to Haripur to make necessary arrangements.[15]

According to J. Hutchison, the Guler fort, called Haripur fort, is situated at the end of the ridge overhanging Banganga, a tributary of the river Beas.[16] Hari Chand founded the town of Haripur on the flat land below the fort near the left bank of the river.[17] Haripur state appears to have been founded in the 14th century but later on due to political upheavals, it merged with the Guler state which is almost coterminous with the present Dehra *tehsil* of district Kangra.

The *raja* of Guler, who was the ruler at Haripur in the later half of the 16th century, was most probably Ram Chand, also known as Parsuram. Ram Chand (1540-1570 CE) and his son Jagdish Chand (1570-1605 CE) remained loyal to Akbar, and when the Mughal forces invaded Kangra, the Guler *raja* was duly rewarded for his loyalty to the emperor by the grant of the territories of Kotla and Nurpur in 1572 CE.[18]

According to the instructions of the Guru, Sawan Mal approached Parsuram or Ram Chand who was much impressed by his piety and devotion. The ruler of Haripur became a devotee of the Guru and allowed Sawan Mal to have as much timber as was needed. According to *Mehma Parkash*, heavy rafts of wood were floated in the river Beas and collected at Goindwal. The Guru subsequently distributed the timber to the needy persons.[19] Later on the *raja* of Haripur alongwith his family members accompanied Sawan Mal to Goindwal for paying homage to the Guru.[20]

Construction of Baoli

The construction of *baoli* at Goindwal was a multi-purpose project. Sri Guru Amar Das decided to give to the Sikhs a central place for gatherings of the whole community while at the same time meeting the shortage of water supply to the newly founded township. A site for *baoli* was chosen and excavation work started. After digging very deep, it was found that a rock blocked access to the aquifer. The Guru came to know about this and enquired if there was a Sikh sufficiently courageous to drive a peg into the base with the object of removing the obstruction. The Guru at the same time warned that the operation involved great peril. The man who performed it must be able to stem the current which would issue from the aperture formed by the peg, and could drown him. Bhai Manak Chand offered himself for this perilous task.[21] He was one of the prominent Sikhs of Sri Guru Amar Das later recorded in the list of the prominent Sikhs by Bhai Gurdas in his 11th *var*.[22] According to Bhai Kahan Singh, he belonged to the village of Vairowal, near Goindwal in the modern district of Amritsar, and had been married to one of the nieces of the third Guru.

Manak Chand first drove the peg into the base and when he extracted the peg

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water gushed out in a torrent and flooded the *baoli*, so that Manak Chand could not be seen for a while. His widowed mother and his young wife fearing that he had been drowned, began to wail and cry. The Guru assured them that all would be well. His body was brought out of the *baoli* and to the utter relief of the onlookers resuscitated. The Guru blessed him and appointed him incharge of the one of twenty-two bishoprics created by him for the spread of Sikhism.[23] Mai Das, a Vaishnavite Jogi, was specially entrusted to him for spiritual guidance. Mai Das belonged to village Narli[24] (Distt. Lahore) and had been wandering in search of spiritual solace. When he met the Guru, he was entrusted to Manak Chand.[25]

There has been a difference of opinion with regard to the year of construction of the *baoli*. According to Sarup Das, Bhai Santokh Singh and Giani Gian Singh, the hindrance to the water of the *baoli* was removed exactly at the time when Akbar conquered Chittore, the famous fort of Rajasthan.[26] The conquest of Chittore was made on February 24, 1568 CE.[27] Accordingly, the *baoli* would have been completed in February of 1568 CE. But modern researchers like Bhai Kahn Singh, Teja Singh and Ganda Singh are of the opinion that it was completed in 1559 CE.

The inhabitants of Goindwal were happy to have the *baoli* constructed by the Guru. However, one *tapa*, who had settled in Goindwal, and belonged to the priestly class of Hindus, the Brahmins, was bitterly opposed to the Guru for his socio-religious reforms. The Guru had made it obligatory for everyone to partake of meals in the common kitchen before seeing him, and had also exhorted the Sikhs not to perform the usual Hindu rites at the time of death or birth.[28] They were instructed only to recite *Gurbani* instead. This was not relished by the *tapa*, and he was always speaking ill of the Guru. Once he was invited by the Guru to a feast but he refused to accept the invitation. Later on, when he learned that the Guru was also distributing money amongst the invitees, he sent his son to the feast. This exposed his greed to the inhabitants.[29] Sri Guru Ram Das has, in the following hymn, referred to this incident :

No anchorite is one who ever, like one struck with leprosy, runs after greed for lucre.
This anchorite receives not approved charity in proper manner.
Later, fallen into regret, his son he seated among recepients of charity.
All the elders made fun to him.
Saying, this anchorite by passion of greed is gripped.
Wherever he knows wealth to be scarce, is he nowhere seen.
Wherever prosperity he notices, from his religious principles he falls.
The holy thus contemplated : Brethern ! this is no anchorite; He is a hypocrite.
The holy he calumniates, and the worldly-minded lauds —
For this sin is he by the Supreme Being condemned.
The fruit of calumny of the holy is, ruined is all his benefit of austerity.
Appearing among the elders, he passes for an anchorite, in hiding does sinful deeds.
His secret sin the Lord to the elders has clearly revealed.
Dharmaraja commanded his minions to cast this anchorite
where are thrown the worst sinners.

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Then let none see the face of this anchorite,
Who by the holy Preceptor is condemned.
Nanak narrates what at the Divine Portal has transpired :
The inner meaning thereof shall be realized by one by God enlightened.[30]

During one of the visits of Akbar to Punjab, the Brahmins made a complaint to the emperor against the Guru — that the Guru was exhorting the people to abandon idol worship, pilgrimage and caste distinction; that the Guru had introduced the novel way of seating all castes in a *pangat* as equals in his common kitchen. Emperor Akbar asked for a report on the complaint.[31]

Bhai Jetha who was deputed to respond explained to the emperor that it was better than worship of idol to recognise God's light in everybody and hurt no one. Sikhism preaches that one should see His light in everyone and hurt nobody. Showing mercy is the real pilgrimage, to bear no enmity is akin to fasting, to renounce hypocrisy and repeating the Name are the main elements of Sikh religion.[32] The Guru gives honour to all while he himself remains humble. The emperor was pleased with the clarification.

Later on, when Bhai Jetha succeeded the third Nanak as Sri Guru Ram Das, he composed the following hymn on the subject :

By the Master's teaching keep in heart treasure of the Name Divine.
Annulling evil of egoism, turn the Lord's humble slave.
Thereby shall be won the boon of this life, discomfiture never coming.
Saith Nanak : Greatly fortunate are such as
By the Master's guidance joy in God have obtained. Treasure of merit is the Lord.
By meditating on the Lord by the Master's teaching
Is attained honour at the Divine Portal.
By repetition of God's Name the face turns radiant and one is exalted.
Saith Nanak : The Master is image of the Lord,
By whose union is attained the Name Divine.[33]

In addition to the casteist Hindus, Muslims, especially Sheikhs of Goindwal, had been a constant source of harassment to the Sikhs. The patience of the Sikhs had been put to severest test but the Guru did not allow his Sikhs to retaliate. Once, some armed *sanyasis* visited the village and the Muslims tried to harass them also.[34] The *sanyasis* suitably punished them. On this occasion Sri Guru Amar Das is said to have written the following hymn addressing the Sheikh :

O Sheikh still thy selfhood and abiding in fear of Lord shed thy craziness.
For, through Guru's fear many were emancipated and
Bowing to His fear attained to the Fearless God.
Pierce thy hard heart with the Word and peace comes to abide within thee.
For, the deeds you do in equipoise are approved by Lord.
Says Nanak : Ask if you may any man of wisdom; through lust or wrath no one has attained to the Lord.[35]

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Akbar's Visit

There is a well-established tradition among the Sikhs that Akbar visited Goindwal and met Sri Guru Amar Das. This is not improbable, as the emperor's route for going to Lahore, the capital of Punjab, as described in *Ain-i-Akbari*, passed through Goindwal on the bank of the Beas. According to *Mehma Parkash*, the emperor visited the Guru after his conquest of Chittore. Bhai Santokh Singh in *Suraj Parkash* also affirms that after his victory over the Rajputs of Chittore, Akbar came to see the Guru.[36] As has already been mentioned, the famous Rajput fort was conquered by the Mughal forces in 1568 CE. It is, therefore, most probable that Akbar visited the Guru in 1570-71 CE, when he visited the Punjab.[37] The emperor is said to have offered *jagir* to the Guru for running the *langar* (common kitchen) which was politely declined. According to Macauliffe, a few villages were offered to Bibi Bhani, the Guru's daughter, which later on formed the nucleus for building the city of Amritsar.[38]

Twenty-two Manjis

Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE) travelled far and wide, and wherever he went he established a congregation or *sangat*.[39] That was the technique of his missionary work. These congregations were scattered and lacked organised links with the Guru and among themselves. It was, therefore, felt by Sri Guru Amar Das that the scattered *sangats* or congregations should be organised in a system. The Guru divided his spiritual domain into twenty-two bishoprics or *manjis*, as they were called. A pious and devoted Sikh was placed incharge of every bishopric, and Sikhs were thus provided with convenient local centres linked with the Guru. The main duty of the incharge of *manjis* was to preach Sikhism in his territory and to keep the Guru in touch with the local *sangat*. The following were the names of the first twenty-two *manjidars* appointed by the Guru : Alayar, Sachan Such, Sadharan, Sawan Mal, Sukhan, Handal, Kedari, Kheda, Gangu Shah, Darbari, Paro, Phera, Buha, Beni, Mahesa, Maidas, Manak Chand, Murari, Raja Ram, Rangshah, Rangdas and Lalo.[40]

Sri Guru Amar Das showed great foresight and wisdom in selecting the *manjidars*, for example, Alayar was a devoted Sikh and a dealer of horses; Sawan Mal had gone to Haripur to bring timber for building of houses at Goindwal; and Manak Chand had risked his life in digging the *baoli*, etc. Thus, all the *manjidars* were tried and trusted Sikhs. The system considerably extended the influence of Sikhism in an organised manner.

The Guru breathed his last on September 1, 1574 CE or 1631 BK. The Guru's pontificate lasted for about twenty-two years and five months.[41]

Contribution of Sri Guru Amar Das

Sri Guru Angad Dev had blessed his successor thus:

> Sri Guru Amar Das shall be the home of the homeless, the honour of the unhonoured, the strength of the strengthless, the support of the unsupported, the shelter of the unsheltered, the protector of the unprotected, the restorer of what is lost, the

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emancipator of the captives.[42]

In these words, Sri Guru Angad Dev not only laid down the objectives for Sri Guru Amar Das, but gave a blueprint for the entire Sikh movement.[43] In a way, it was a charter for which the Sikh movement was to strive and struggle. It was declaration of equality and honourable coexistence with everybody. It was assuring shelter to the shelterless, home to the homeless, protection to the lowly, elevation to the downtrodden and emancipation to the captives. Eventually, the Sikh Gurus were to bring about these conditions and Sri Guru Amar Das made every effort to achieve these objectives.

Free Land and Timber

When it was brought to the notice of Sri Guru Amar Das that some people at Goindwal had no living accommodation, he allotted land to the homeless free of cost and asked them to build their houses on the land. The people were ready to build their *kucha* houses themselves on the land with their own efforts. Again it was brought to the notice of the Guru that there was no timber for roofing and doors, etc. The Guru then sent his nephew, Sawan Mal, to bring timber from Haripur. When the timber was presented to the Guru, he distributed it to the needy keeping in view only the size of the land in their possession.[44]

The Langar — An Institution of Social Equality

Sri Guru Amar Das popularised the institution of *langar*, serving free meals. The Guru had declared that he would not grant audience to anybody who would not eat in *sangat*. Accordingly even important visitors to the Guru, including Akbar and the *raja* of Haripur, were required to go to the Guru's *langar* before having an audience with the Guru.

The institution of *langar* served as economic leveller as the rich Sikhs used to give provisions out of which the poor were fed. The high caste and low caste used to be fed side by side. In that caste-ridden society this institution gave a shattering blow to the rigidity of the caste system and paved the way for social equality.

Equality of Women

In the medieval India, woman was considered much inferior to man. Sri Guru Nanak Dev says : "Why do you consider woman inferior who gives birth to princes."[45]

In the days of Sri Guru Amar Das, *sati* had become very common and the widows used to be burnt forcibly on the pyre of their husbands. The Guru raised his voice against this system and strictly banned the practice. He said :

> Women are burnt in the fire with their husbands. If they appreciate their husbands they undergo sufficient pain by their husband's death. Nanak if they appreciate not their husbands, why should they be burnt. Whether the husband be alive or dead such women will flee far away from him.[46]

Not only did the Guru condemn the custom of *sati*, but also rejected the *purdah*

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system. When the *raja* of Haripur with his *ranis* visited the Guru, the *ranis* were sporting veils. The Guru disallowed that also.[47] The Guru also appointed many women as his local representatives acting as a link between the Guru and the local *sangat*.

Religion for Householders

Among the Sufis as well as among the Siddhas this world was considered evil. Maulana Rumi of Persia says, "You aspire to live in this world and aspire to attain God. This idea is fantastic and impossible."[48] The Siddhas or ascetics in the days of Sri Guru Amar Das also held the same belief asserting that this world is full of evil and that one cannot attain God while living in this world. Sri Guru Amar Das emphatically refuted this idea. According to him the highest worldly ambition was not incompatible with the purest and godliest life. Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, and later on Sufism to some extent, always held that renunciation was the highest virtue. They always looked upon the world and worldly pursuits as contemptible. Sri Guru Amar Das put the seal of his sanction on worldly pursuits provided that they are not indulged in at the cost of righteousness and truthfulness. He emphasised that one should live in this world in order to attain spiritual bliss — *Anand*. He says in *Sri Raag* :

> Men put on many garbs and wander abroad, but in their hearts and minds practice deception. They shall not find God's palace and dying their abode shall be in filth. O man, be a hermit in thine own home. He who had been enlightened by the Guru's instruction practiseth truth, self-restraint and good works. He conquereth his heart by the Guru's instruction and obtaineth salvation and deliverance in his own home.[49]

The verses of Sri Guru Amar Das expand on the verses of Guru Nanak, explaining the philosophical intricacies. The longest verse that Sri Guru Amar Das wrote is named *Anand*, Bliss, which is recited in all Sikh ceremonies.

— *K.S.*

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   ਝਖੜਿ ਵਾਉ ਨ ਡੋਲਈ ਪਰਬਤੁ ਮੇਰਾਣੁ ॥
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ਭਇਆ ਮਨੂਰੁ ਕੰਚਨੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੇ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਿਨੇਹਾ ॥

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ਤੀਰਥ ਉਦਮੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੀਆ ਸਭ ਲੋਕ ਉਧਰਣ ਅਰਥਾ ॥ ... ...
ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਆਏ ਕੁਲਖੇਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪੁਰਬੁ ਹੋਆ ॥੩॥
ਦੁਤੀਆ ਜਮੁਨ ਗਏ ਗੁਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਨੁ ਕੀਆ ॥ ... ...
ਤ੍ਰਿਤੀਆ ਆਏ ਸੁਰਸਰੀ ਤਹ ਕਉਤਕੁ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ ॥ ... ...
ਜਾਗਾਤੀਆ ਉਪਾਵ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਕਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ਡਿਠਾ ਭੰਨਿ ਬੋਲਕਾ ਸਭਿ ਉਠਿ ਗਇਆ ॥
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NANAK IV — SRI GURU RAM DAS

Sri Guru Ram Das, the fourth Nanak, is remembered by the Sikhs as humility personified. Like his predecessor Gurus, he was adept in music and wrote *bani* in nine new musical measures. He was also a great calligraphist and scribed Sri Guru Nanak Dev's *Jap (ji)*. Signatures of Sri Guru Ram Das became the stamp of authenticity and can still be seen in some old manuscripts of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* wherein it is specially mentioned in the table of contents that "the *Jap (ji)* in the manuscript is a copy of the one carrying the signatures of the fourth Nanak" (*Jap Nisan Sri Guru Ram Das*). It is an indicator of the depth of his understanding of *Sikhi* that he was deputed by Sri Guru Amar Das to Emperor Akbar's court to refute the charges of the Hindu Brahmins regarding allegations that some verses of *Gurbani* hurt the sentiments of Muslims. Sri Guru Ram Das, then known as Bhai Jetha, accompanied the third Nanak on his travels to Kurukshetra and Hardwar, and gives an account of these in one of his compositions. Recording his debt of gratitude to the True Guru, he states that but for the Guru's refuge he would have wandered like a stray bird :

> I would have been pushed around uncared for and neglected, had the Guru not elevated me from the worm of the dirt and established me.[1]

Bhai Jetha was born at Lahore on September 24, 1534 CE. His father was named Hari Das or Har Das. The Sikh sources provide only sketchy information about his childhood and subsequent moving to Goindwal and coming into the fold of Sikhism. According to Sikh chronicles, Jetha was orphaned at the age of seven.[2] Thereafter, he remained under the guardianship of his maternal grandmother, who belonged to Basarke, the native village of Sri Guru Amar Das. As Jetha grew up, he started working as a vendor of parched grams in the streets of Lahore to earn his living. There he came into contact with the Sikh *sangat* on their way to Goindwal on the annual visit to the Guru. Bhai Jetha accompanied them to Goindwal. He had an audience with the Guru, and so touched was he by the Guru's love and holiness, that he decided to stay at Goindwal and practise his profession as a vendor of parched grams there. One day when Jetha was carrying his wares, Sri Guru Amar Das' wife pointing towards Jetha,

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told the Guru that a young man like him would be a suitable match for their daughter, Bhani. Since Bhai Jetha had lived at Basarke, he was known to Sri Guru Amar Das, and had impressed him as a young man of pleasing mien. The Guru agreed, and soon the marriage of Bibi Bhani was solemnized with Bhai Jetha.

It seems that even before moving to Goindwal Jetha was drawn towards the Sikh way of life. As stated, there is strong reason to believe that he came into contact with the third Master even before he (Sri Guru Amar Das) had assumed guruship.[3] Probably it was the time when Sri Guru Amar Das was busy developing the town of Goindwal into a vibrant Sikh centre as desired by Sri Guru Angad Dev. It seems that Bhai Jetha was one of those Sikhs who made Goindwal their new home. This surmise is further corroborated by the fact that Bhai Jetha and Bibi Bhani remained in Goindwal even after their marriage, indicating that if Bhai Jetha had retained his connection with Lahore, he would have returned there after marriage. Jetha's marriage with Bibi Bhani took place around 1553 CE.[4] Accordingly, before his nomination to guruship in 1574 CE, Bhai Jetha stayed with the Master for nearly twenty years at Goindwal leading a happy conjugal life. He was blessed with three children, viz., Pirthi Chand (b. 1558 CE), Mahadev (b. 1560 CE), and the youngest, Sri Guru Arjun Dev (b. 1563 CE).[5]

The Sikh chronicles admire Jetha as an epitome of humility. So deep was his commitment to the precepts of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and so firm his devotion that he completely identified himself with the Guru and the *sangat*. It was under the guidance of the third Nanak that he acquired the knowledge of the Sikh tenets. Gradually he became intimately connected with the Sikh missionary work in and outside Punjab. In his verses he refers to some historical events that provide valuable information on the struggle he and his predecessors had to carry out against the external as well as internal forces opposed to the mainstream of *Sikhi*.

In January 1572 CE, to spread the gospel of the Sikh faith, Sri Guru Amar Das undertook a journey to Kurukshetra and visited some places situated on the banks of the Jamuna and the Ganges. Some chroniclers, and even modern scholars, do not present an authentic account of the timing and purpose of the above journey. The hymns, which Sri Guru Ram Das composed, refer to this visit and give a vivid account of this journey, putting to rest all the misgivings about it.[6] It indicates that Bhai Jetha had accompanied the Guru to these places. The Sikh sources state that when the construction of *baoli* was in full swing, Bhai Jetha would not hesitate to do manual labour. His cousins of Lahore who happened to be at Goindwal mocked at him, for they thought it below his dignity as son-in-law of the third Master.[7] Sikh chronicles also describe Bhai Jetha as an articulate and skilful exponent of the Sikh doctrine. In 1566-67 CE he represented Sri Guru Amar Das at Emperor Akbar's court at Lahore. At that time he refuted the allegations of the opponents of the Guru, who desired to proscribe the Sikh faith with the help of the Mughal State.[8] Consequently, the opponents had to face rejection and discomfiture at the royal court. It was on the advice of Sri Guru Amar Das that he selected the site for Chak Guru or Ramdaspur, now known as

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Amritsar.[9] It was around the *jagir* that Emperor Akbar had granted to Bibi Bhani on his visit to Goindwal in 1571.[10] In the *Amritsar Gazetteer* it has been explicitly stated that Sri Guru Ram Das acquired this land on payment of Rs. 700/- *Akbari* to the *zamindar* of village Tung.[11]

Bhai Jetha's unstinted devotion, selfless service and fervent faith endeared him to one and all. Though his nomination to guruship because of his ideal conduct had become a distinct possibility, yet Sri Guru Amar Das kept testing him to ensure that the torch of *Sikhi* was put in proper hands. The lives of Baba Mohan and Baba Mohri, the sons of Sri Guru Amar Das, were not in conformity with Sikh precepts. Baba Mohan was a recluse, and Baba Mohri was too much of a materialist. Thus, they both ruled themselves out for carrying the mantle of guruship.[12] Bhai Rama, the other son-in-law of the Guru, being a *manji* holder, was actively involved in the propagation of the Sikh mission. After considering all his Sikhs, the choice for guruship ultimately came down to Bhai Jetha and Bhai Rama. Sri Guru Amar Das bade each of them to build a platform for his use for morning and evening discourses. When the platforms were ready, the Guru inspected them and expressing his disapproval asked them to rebuild the platforms. In this exercise, which they had to repeat time and again, Rama lost his patience, whereas Jetha diligently went about the task of rebuilding and humbly confessed his inability to perform the job to the satisfaction of the Master.[13] Having seen that Jetha would make a perfect choice for guruship, the Guru, like his predecessors, nominated him as his spiritual heir during his own lifetime. The contemporary Sikh sources state that the Guru's sons were reluctant to accept Jetha's succession to guruship, but Sri Guru Amar Das prevailed upon them to submit before him as a mark of their respect to Guru Nanak's throne.[14] Thus on the demise of Sri Guru Amar Das on August 31, 1574 CE, Jetha now known as Sri Guru Ram Das, assumed the guruship that lasted for about seven years.

A cursory glance at the political scenario of the period of Sri Guru Ram Das' pontificate reveals that Akbar continued to administer the Empire on the principle of *Sulah-Kul*. Instead of betraying any sign of religious bigotry, he attempted to free the Mughal polity from the influence of the *ulema*. The most significant development of the period was the promulgation of *Mahzar*, i.e., the petition that had been agreed upon and signed by the leading *ulema* of the State. They had declared in it that in case there was difference of opinion concerning the *Shariat*, then the emperor could adopt any of the opinions advanced by various schools, which would be binding on them.[15] It had empowered the emperor to interpret the Muslim law and consequently the emperor became the arbiter of political and religious affairs of the state. It was a serious blow to the power and position of the *ulema* in the State. The orthodox Muslim elements, which were opposed to the emperor's liberal outlook, charged him with betraying the interests of Muslims and Islam. They were successful to whip up religious frenzy to declare *jehad* on him.[16] In their endeavour to dethrone him they invited Mirza Hakim, the rival of Akbar, and promised him full support. In 1579 CE he appeared with a force in the vicinity of Lahore, but was no match for the Mughal forces stationed

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in Punjab.[17] No doubt the orthodox Muslim elements failed in their attempt, but they initiated a process which later on culminated in the movement for the revival of Islam in India.

Akbar was prompt to take appropriate measures to improve administration in Punjab. The *madad-i-maash* grantees (grants given on religious grounds) in the Punjab were facing some hardships at the hands of revenue officials and big *zamindars*. In 1576 CE, the emperor ordered that *aima* lands (lands given as reward or favour) should be kept distinct from the *khalsa* lands (lands directly under the emperor) and *jagir* lands (lands given to *jagirdars* for a fixed revenue contribution to the emperor's treasury). He further decreed that a particular recipient of religious grant should be given a consolidated holding at one place.[18] The Afghans, who had settled in Punjab as traders and husbandmen, would oppress the weak with impunity. In 1576 CE, the emperor ordered Raja Todar Mal to curb their influence and so scatter them all over the empire that in future they would cease to be a nuisance to any locality.[19] During the governorship of Shah Quli Khan there prevailed laxity in the administration of justice in Punjab. Akbar immediately recalled the governor and despatched Said Khan to take over the charge of the administration of Punjab.[20] All these factors suggest that Emperor Akbar would not allow any internal or external force to disturb the peace and law and order situation in Punjab. It was thus a most opportune time for Sikhs to expand their activities in different parts of the subcontinent. In this context, I.B. Banerjee's assertion that Sri Guru Ram Das' pontificate was more or less eventless, seems to be quite far from the historical truth.[21]

Besides consolidating the ideals and institutions introduced by his predecessors, Sri Guru Ram Das took some novel steps, which significantly contributed to the growth and organization of Sikhism. The most outstanding and lasting contribution of Sri Guru Ram Das towards the development of Sikhism was the new Sikh centre of Ramdaspur, which he had established in 1577 CE.[22] A tank called *amrit-sarovar* (pool of nectar) was dug there, and the centre subsequently came to be known as Amritsar.[23] To develop it into a township Sri Guru Ram Das invited traders, artisans and craftsmen to settle down there.[24] It went a long way to develop it into an important commercial and trading centre of North India in the early 19th century. Since Sri Guru Ram Das had taken up his residence at Ramdaspur, it soon became the nucleus of the socio-religious and cultural activities of the Sikhs. The socio-spiritual activities of the Sikhs at Ramdaspur had ushered in an era which has been likened to that of an ideal State.[25] To the bards Satta and Balwand the guruship of Sri Guru Ram Das and the life at Ramdaspur was no less than a miracle come true :

> Blessed be Sri Guru Ram Das, exalted by Him who created him.
> Fulfilled in him is the miracle — the Creator Himself his form has taken.
> His disciples and the congregation as the image of the
> Supreme Being have venerated him.
> Thou art eternal, unfathomable, immeasurable —
> Unknowable thy extent.

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Those that with love have served thee have by thee been liberated.
Greed, avarice, lust, wrath and attachment,
With their brood, hast thou cast out.
Blessed is thy abode, holy thy congregation's display.
Thou in contemplation dost appear as Nanak, Lehna and Guru Amar Das.[26]

Significantly, the town of Ramdaspur established in the *Majha* region of Punjab, attracted a large number of Sikhs from amongst the common folk, and these sons of the soil later on became the backbone of the fighting force of the Sikh Gurus.[27] It may not be wrong to say that by founding Ramdaspur at a central place in Punjab, Sri Guru Ram Das laid the foundation of the future glory of the Sikh nation.[28] Nevertheless, it was a unique effort at city-building in which spirituality regulated the life of the citizens. This concept of a human dwelling had first been put into practice by Guru Nanak when he had founded the city of Kartarpur. Undoubtedly, the foundation of Ramdaspur marked an epoch in the history of the Sikh *Panth*. Even today it continues to influence the Sikh way, for all affairs concerning the religio-political developments of the Sikh community are decided there. By virtue of its significance among the Sikhs, it has rightly acquired the status of the capital of the Sikh *Panth*.

No historian can afford to ignore the organising skill of the fourth Guru, for it was during his tenure that the institution of the *masands* acquired prominence. Though the *manji* system instituted by Sri Guru Amar Das existed at that time, it had lost much of its vibrancy. The *manjidars* spread the tenets of *Sikhi* as well as represented the Guru, and the *manjis* they sat on signified what in Persian is called *masnad*, the high seat. Thus, in due course these *manjidars* came to be called *masands*, a corrupt form of the Persian word *masnad*. We find that they were also known as *Ramdasias* after the name of Sri Guru Ram Das who had instituted their order, and whom they represented.[29] Sri Guru Ram Das appointed some Sikhs to preach Sikhism in far-flung regions and to act as representatives of the Guru in order to collect voluntary offerings, which used to be both in kind and cash, from the Sikhs. It were these offerings which financed the developmental activities at Amritsar. As the representatives of the Guru at their assigned places, these Sikhs headed the Sikh *sangats* for all purposes concerning *Sikhi*. On behalf of the Guru, they had the authority to initiate the neophytes into Sikhism. Those who had embraced *Sikhi* through the *masands* were known as *meli* and *sahlang*.[30] The *masands* became a vital link between the Guru and his Sikhs residing at far away places from the central seat. They would come with the *sangats* of the area, bring their contributions to Amritsar and pay their respects to the Master. By virtue of their functions the *masands* proved to be more than mere preachers of Sikh faith. Their role in the spread of Sikh religion in different parts of the subcontinent and even beyond at the early stage of its history was highly commendable.[31]

As observed earlier, the ethos and practices of the Sikh *Panth* were in a state of evolution. To consolidate the achievements of his predecessors, Sri Guru Ram Das thought it prudent to establish a disciplinary framework of mode of worship for the

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Sikh community. Thus did the Master speak :

One known as disciple of the holy Preceptor
Must, rising at dawn, on the Name Divine meditate.
At dawn must he not fail to rise,
Should cleanse himself and in God's Name,
the Pool of Amrit take bath.
Then, as by the Master instructed, must he on the
Name Divine repeatedly utter —
Thereby shall all his sins, evil and foul doings be shed.
Then with rise of day must he chant the Master's Word —
In rest and movement on the Name Divine must he meditate.
The disciple that with each breath and morsel on the Lord meditates,
Shall that Master's pleasure win.
The Master to such of the disciples his teaching imparts,
As the Lord's grace have received.
Nanak, the servant of God, seeks the dust of feet of such a disciple
As contemplating the Name Divine, to it inspires others.[32]

The above code of conduct later on served as the basic framework of *Rahit Maryada* for the Sikhs. Sri Guru Ram Das underlined the merits of service and charity which were a prerequisite to accomplish the community projects. Sri Guru Ram Das also composed verses, which subsequently became an integral part of the marriage ceremony of the Sikhs.

Sri Guru Ram Das further streamlined the system of making copies of *Gurbani* for distribution amongst the various *sangats* thus ensuring transmission of *Gurbani* in its purest form. As Sri Guru Ram Das was actively involved in the organizational set up of the *Panth* under the aegis of Sri Guru Amar Das, we can safely speculate that he was fully conversant with the *Gurbani* tradition that had grown under the patronage of his predecessors. On his part he introduced a number of new *raags*, viz., *Dev-Gandhari*, *Bihagarha*, *Jaitsari*, *Todi*, *Bairagi*, *Gaund*, *Nat Narain*, *Mali Gaurha*, *Kedara*, *Kanrha* and *Kalyan*, which reflects his understanding of the Indian poetics and prosody. Since these *raags* had not been employed by the earlier Gurus, the use of these by the fourth Guru expanded the musical dimensions of *Gurbani*.[33] He also made an effective use of folk poetic genre such as *Ghorian*, *Lavan*, *Vanjara* and *Karhala*, which received spiritual content in the hymns of the Gurus.[34] He brought into sharp focus the personality and philosophy of Sri Guru Nanak by hailing him as *Jagat-Guru* — Preceptor of the whole world.[35] He underlined the future importance of *Gurbani* by making use of it in its modern sense.[36] Similarly, his composition to explain the theological terms of *Moolmantar* through the medium of scripture was a unique contribution.[37]

Following faithfully in the footsteps of his Master, he did not allow the pseudo-gurus to tamper with *Gurbani*. He fervently declared that only the hymns of the Sikh Gurus were acceptable to the Sikhs as scripture.[38] Ever since the guruship of Sri Guru Amar Das the frontiers of the Sikh mission had widened; the *manjidars* and the

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masands had reached even remote regions, leading to an unprecedented increase in the followers of the Sikh precepts; and the *dharamsals* had sprung up at far-flung places. To meet the spiritual needs of the neophytes, authentic copies of the sacred texts became the need of the day. It called for renewed efforts to prepare the copies of the *pothis* of *Gurbani* for circulation among the Sikh *sangat*. To encourage the Sikhs to prepare the *pothis* of *Gurbani* on a grand scale, Sri Guru Ram Das stressed that labour of those Sikhs was also sanctified who were engaged in writing the glory of God.[39] It suggests that during his pontificate, scribing of *Gurbani* texts attracted keen interest of the Sikhs. The editorial notes namely, *Jap Sri Guru Ram Das jio ké daskhata ka nakal*, i.e., 'copy of the text of *Jap (ji)* recorded in the hand of Sri Guru Ram Das', found recorded in the old manuscripts of the *Sri Guru Granth*, point to the fact that Sri Guru Ram Das himself was deeply involved in the scribing activities. The contemporary Sikh sources inform that public reading of *Gurbani* had become an essential part of the religious life in the *dharamsals*.[40] Bhatt Gaynd, while highlighting the personality of Sri Guru Ram Das, refers to the daily discipline of a Sikh and especially mentions that early morning ablutions followed by public reading and listening of *Gurbani* had become popular among the Sikhs of his times. The modern-day practice of taking *vak* is a reminder of the routine then followed.[41]

The founder of *Sikhi*, by anointing Bhai Lehna as Sri Guru Angad, had established a unique tradition. It was not heredity or lineage that qualified a person for guruship. It was the test the Master would apply to see in his successor the ability to carry on the mission with single-minded devotion. No other consideration than merit formed the litmus test for guruship. But discontented descendants tried to raise furore from time to time over the issue of succession. One of the early claimants to the guruship was Baba Sri Chand, the ascetic son of Sri Guru Nanak, who had established his own sect known as Udasis. The descendants of Sri Guru Angad were also not happy over the nomination of Sri Guru Amar Das to guruship. Similarly, the scions of Sri Guru Amar Das resented the succession of Sri Guru Ram Das. The contemporary Sikh sources confirm that though Sri Guru Amar Das had prevailed upon his sons to accept the spiritual authority of Sri Guru Ram Das, it seems they did it in a half-hearted manner.[42] The reason was that during the pontificate of the third Master, Goindwal had developed into a flourishing Sikh centre and Baba Mohan and his associates were not willing to part with it. Obviously, to be deprived of guruship meant no rights over the Sikh centre at Goindwal. According to Bhai Gurdas, the nomination of Sri Guru Ram Das to guruship was such a terrible shock to Baba Mohan that he lost his mental equipoise.[43] There is evidence to suggest that Baba Mohan was not only a claimant to Sri Guru Nanak's throne but had actually established a parallel line of guruship at Goindwal.

The compositions of Sri Guru Ram Das provide clues to the nature of hostility and opposition that had developed against the Sikh precepts at that time. Sri Guru Ram Das' use of certain terms, namely, *nindak*, *bemukh*, *kooriar*, *manmukh* and *dusht* in relation to the activities of his rivals deserve a special mention in this context. The

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use of these terms is not limited to those who were not in consonance with the Sikh way, but also included persons who showed inimical inclinations towards the Guru. Sri Guru Ram Das affirms that the chief aim of such persons was to usurp God's wealth for self-aggrandisement. The Sikhs had been asked to avoid associating with them.[44] At the same time, the Guru continued his efforts to show them the right path and bring them to the fold of the faithful. Many of the delinquent responded to his persuasion and became true Sikhs.[45] On the whole, however, the attempt at rapport failed as the detractors continued to conspire against the Guru.[46] To undermine the Guru's position, the detractors continued to target the vacillating followers to join their side.[47] To check the exploitation of the Sikhs at their hands, Sri Guru Ram Das had decreed that except the Guru, the Sikhs should not take command from any one else. Moreover, the Sikhs were advised to shun the company of such fellows.[48] Sri Guru Ram Das remarked that the detractors and their associates were destined to fail. He states that Sri Guru Nanak had disapproved of them and again Sri Guru Angad had declared them false. Sri Guru Amar Das had come to the conclusion that they were miserable wretches and hopeless fellows. Now Sri Guru Ram Das showed them the way to their regeneration.[49]

What concerned the Gurus most was the evil attempts of the pretenders to churn out mundane and pedestrian poetical compositions and pass these off as *Gurbani* in order to attract the Sikhs to their camp.[50] This evidence affirms their evil intention to usurp guruship, and for this coveted aim they indulged in tirade and slanderous campaign against the Guru, encouraged desertion in the ranks of the Sikhs, and imitated the Sikh Gurus only to compose *kachi-bani*. The Sikh chronicles affirm that Baba Sri Chand, one of the strong contenders to guruship, reconciled himself to his fate and developed cordial relations with the fourth Master.[51] Sri Guru Angad's sons, though unhappy over the succession of Guru Amar Das, could not muster enough support to forestall Sri Guru Amar Das' succession. The *Mina* tradition, which we will discuss later, had not yet taken off. In fact, it was Baba Mohan and his close relatives' hostility towards Sri Guru Ram Das that created a crisis in the Sikh *Panth*. The claim of Baba Mohan and his descendants is recorded in the colophon of *Ahiyapur Pothi*. The said claim states that the custodians of the *Pothi* had got the blessings of the three generations of the Sikh Gurus, and that anyone following the Guru outside their progeny would certainly go to hell.[52] It indicates that Baba Mohan and his descendants refused to accord recognition to Sri Guru Ram Das, and favoured heredity as the basis for succession. The extant *Goindwal Pothis* are a clear proof that Baba Mohan and his close relatives had compiled a sort of scripture to attract the Sikhs to their establishment. On the testimony of Sri Guru Ram Das we can safely affirm that the schism created by Baba Mohan and his descendants was indeed a matter of serious concern to him. The Sikh chronicles state that even during the guruship of Sri Guru Ram Das, the issue of succession had become the cause of dissensions in the family of the Guru. Pirthi Chand, the elder son of Sri Guru Ram Das, openly avowed to succeed his father. To usurp the guruship he made every attempt to discredit other contenders,

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and resorted to every kind of machinations and subterfuge. He had become so impatient that he started picking up feuds even with his father.[53] To achieve his motive he had stooped so low that Sri Guru Ram Das was constrained to declare him a *mina* (crooked).[54] The detractors of Sri Guru Ram Das had worked out various alliances against him. Commenting upon the rivals and their associates, Sri Guru Ram Das had remarked :

> Some with friends, sons and brothers have formed factions;
> Some with closely-related in-laws or sons-in-law :
> Some with chief and headman to serve self-interest have formed factions :
> With the Lord, pervasive everywhere alone have I formed faction.
> Other than the Lord have I formed not faction —
> The Lord's attributes, countless, innumerable I sing.
> Those with whom these others form factions, all vanish —
> Their false factions bringing them regrets.
> They last not; by their thinking they plan and act evil :
> We with the Lord have formed faction,
> Whose equal none is.[55]

It is evident that the detractors of Sri Guru Ram Das enjoyed the support of the authorities at the village as well as *pargana* level. It is quite possible that they tried to create misunderstanding and suspicion in the official circles by spreading canards against the Guru and his Sikhs. The local as well as provincial level officials cultivated hostility towards Sri Guru Ram Das, simply because of his status and influence among the people. Thus, to undermine his position they had formed a league with the rivals of the Guru, and supported them overtly as well as covertly. The alliance of these factions made the position of Sri Guru Ram Das quite vulnerable. But to stall their unsavoury intentions Sri Guru Ram Das neither retaliated, nor put a petition to the Mughal State. He stayed firm in his faith that falsehood cannot stand before truth. Moreover, he prayed only to God, Who stands for truth and justice.[56] Instead of finding any external support, Sri Guru Ram Das relied on moral courage and spiritual strength. He was of the view that nothing is beyond the Will of God. He remarked that those who are protected by God are freed from submission before any worldly authority.[57] Thus, Sri Guru Ram Das acted like a 'prophet of assurance and hope', and did not in any way allow the schism to harm the unity and integrity of the Sikh *Panth*.

However, the situation did not deteriorate because the State officials were reluctant to openly meddle in the affairs of the Sikh *Panth*. Sri Guru Ram Das had inherited cordial relations with Emperor Akbar. Perhaps the State officials were still aware of the exemplary treatment meted out to the opponents of Sri Guru Amar Das for lodging a false complaint at the royal court.[58] Thus, it was not easy for them to interfere in the affairs of the Sikh *Panth*.

Scholars like Giani Gian Singh aver that in 1579 CE, while returning from Kabul, Emperor Akbar had a meeting with Sri Guru Ram Das. He further states that at that

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time the emperor had ordered the provincial officials at Lahore that the *jagir*, granted to Bibi Bhani, should be demarcated afresh and then transferred in the name of Sri Guru Ram Das.[59] Though some of the modern historians agree with the above view,[60] yet none of the Mughal chroniclers or early Sikh sources give any evidence to corroborate this view. However, Akbar had passed a general order in 1576 CE that *madad-i-maash* land of a particular recipient be consolidated at one place.[61] Thus, it is quite possible that the *jagir*, conferred on Guru Amar Das' daughter earlier, may have been demarcated afresh to consolidate it at one place and this later date some historians have taken as a fresh grant.

Notwithstanding the obstacles he had to overcome, Sri Guru Ram Das' achievements regarding the development and organization of the Sikh *Panth* are indeed remarkable. Besides establishing the well-known centre of religious and temporal activities of the Sikhs at Amritsar, he introduced new ideas and institutions, and codified a distinct Sikh way of religious life that established the Sikh identity. He did not allow dissenters to hinder the evolution of Sikhism and the growth of the Sikh community. He exhorted the Sikhs that instead of seeking outside support they should rely on God for their protection. He provided the much needed moral courage to the Sikhs. Significantly, irrespective of the serious internal crises, he kept intact the integrity and solidarity of the Sikh *Panth*. Having appointed his youngest son Arjun as the Guru, he breathed his last on September 1, 1581 CE.

— *B.S.*

Notes and References

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   ਹਮ ਰੁਲਤੇ ਫਿਰਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਤ ਨ ਪੂਛਤਾ ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਕੀਰੇ ਹਮ ਥਾਪੇ ॥
2. Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Amritsar, 1914, p. 340.
3. Though in the absence of historical evidence it is very difficult to conclude the exact year, yet to arrive at a possible date we have to keep in mind the birth dates of various persons such as Sri Guru Ram Das, his wife Bibi Bhani and their sons.
4. Gupta, Hari Ram : *History of the Sikhs*, p. 31.
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7. Bhalla, Sarup Das : *Mehma Parkash*, Vol. II, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1971, pp. 160-61.
8. Ibid., pp. 138-39, also see the chapter on Guru Amar Das.
9. Chibbar, Kesar Singh : *Bansawali Nama*, pp. 31, 39.
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    ਸਭਿ ਸਿਖ ਬੰਧਪ ਪੁਤ ਭਾਈ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਪੈਰੀ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੪॥ ... ...
    ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਸੋਢੀ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਦੀਆ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਚੁ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ਜੀਉ ॥੫॥

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ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਜਿ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਮੰਨਿ ਲਈ ਰਜਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥
ਮੋਹਰੀ ਪੁਤੁ ਸਨਮੁਖੁ ਹੋਇਆ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੈ ਪੈਰੀ ਪਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥
ਸਭ ਪਵੈ ਪੈਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇਰੀ ਜਿਥੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਪੁ ਰਖਿਆ ॥
ਕੋਈ ਕਰਿ ਬਖੀਲੀ ਨਿਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਆਣਿ ਨਿਵਾਇਆ ॥

15. Badaoni, Abdul Qadir : *Muntkhab-ut-Twarikh*, Eng. trans. by S.A. Ranking, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1848, Vol. II, pp. 279-80.
16. Ibid., p. 284.
17. Akbar, Muhammad : *The Punjab Under the Mughals*, Lahore, 1948, pp. 62-65.
18. Ibid., p. 59.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 60.
21. Banerjee, I.B. : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Calcutta, 1936, Vol. I, p. 187.
22. Kesar Singh Chhibbar informs that work on the tank and town was completed in 1577 CE (see *Bansawali Nama*, p. 40). The Sikh sources describe the new centre by various names such as *Guru ka Chak*, *Chak Ram Das*, and *Ramdaspur*. Significantly, the sources are not unanimous on the acquisition of land for the new centre. Some of the chronicles say that it was situated in the *jagir* that had been assigned by Emperor Akbar to Guru Amar Das' daughter Bibi Bhani, later on transferred to Sri Guru Ram Das. According to another source, Sri Guru Ram Das had purchased it on payment of Rs. 700/- from the *zamindars* of the village Tung. It is also said that the land had been gifted to the Guru by the people of the village of Sultanwind (see Madanjit Kaur : *The Foundation of Amritsar in Historical Perspective*, Journal of Sikh Studies, Vol. II, p. 61). The suffix '*Chak*' to the name of the town suggests that the land was a revenue-free grant. Whenever the Mughal Emperors issued order for the *madad-i-maash*, it invariably enjoined upon the local officials to measure the said area and demarcate the *Chak*, i.e., land of the grant (see Habib, Irfan : *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1965, p. 301).
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ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਮਾਚਾਰੇ ਅਭਰਾ ਸਰੁ ਭਰਿਆ ॥
ਅਕਥ ਕਥਾ ਅਮਰਾ ਪੁਰੀ ਜਿਸੁ ਦੇਇ ਸੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
ਇਹੁ ਜਨਕ ਰਾਜੁ ਗੁਰ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਬਣਿ ਆਵੈ ॥
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ਧੰਨੁ ਧੰਨੁ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਗੁਰੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਿਰਿਆ ਤਿਨੈ ਸਵਾਰਿਆ ॥
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ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤੂ ਲਹਣਾ ਤੂਹੈ ਗੁਰੁ ਅਮਰੁ ਤੂ ਵੀਚਾਰਿਆ ॥
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27. Narang, Gokal Chand : *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 35.
28. Latif, Syad Muhammad : *History of the Punjab*, p. 253; Khazan Singh : *History of the Sikh Religion*, p. 120.
29. Mohsin Fani : *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 68. (English translation relating to the Sikh *Panth* titled *Nanak Panthis* by Ganda Singh, published in *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. I, April 1967, hereafter cited as *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*.
Also see Ganda Singh & Teja Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 25.
30. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 58. The word '*meli*' in Punjab means a companion, a brother in faith, and *sahlang* means connected, indicating those Sikhs who were connected with the Guru through the *masands*.
31. Due to schismatic trends as well as the confrontation with the Mughal State during the 17th century, the *masand* system had degenerated to a considerable extent resulting in their disbandment by Guru Gobind Singh. For deterioration of the *masand* system, see *Parchian Sewa Das*, pp. 111-117; Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : *Bansawali Nama*, pp. 130-32; Bhalla, Sarup Das : *Mehma Parkash*, Vol. II, p. 797; Sukha Singh : *Gurbilas*, pp. 72, 166-67.
32. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Gauri*, pp. 305-306 :
ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥
ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥
ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਦੋਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ ॥
ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ ਬਹਿਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥
ਸੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਇ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥
ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥
ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥੨॥
33. Ibid., *Sri Raag*, p. 93.
34. For the use of the mentioned genre, see Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 81-82, 234-35, 572-576, 774.
35. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Suhi*, p. 733.
ਜਿਸੁ ਘਰਿ ਵਿਰਤੀ ਸੋਈ ਜਾਣੈ ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਛਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ॥
36. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 304.
37. For exposition of the terms of *Moolmantar* by Sri Guru Ram Das, see Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Sarang*, p 1201, and *Raag Kahnrha*, p. 1315.
38. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Gauri*, p. 304.
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਰੀਸੈ ਹੋਰਿ ਕਚੁ ਪਿਚੁ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੇ ਝੜਿ ਪੜੀਐ ॥
ਓਨਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੈ ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਨੋ ਝਖਿ ਮਰਦੇ ਕੜੀਐ ॥੯॥
39. Ibid., *Raag Bihagrha*, p. 540.
ਤੇ ਹਸਤ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਹਹਿ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਿੰਦੁੜੀਏ
ਜੋ ਹਰਿ ਜਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਲੇਖਹਿ ਰਾਮ ॥
Also see, *Raag Gauri*, p. 322.
40. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 444.
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਪੜੀਐ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਤ ਸੁਣਤ ਦੁਖੁ ਜਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥
Also see, *Raag Dhanasari*, p. 669.
41. Ibid., *Swaiyé Sri Mukh Baak Mahla V*, p. 1402.
ਇਕਿ ਪੜਹਿ ਸੁਣਹਿ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਪਰਭਾਤਿਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਇਸ਼੍ਨਾਨੁ ॥
42. See reference no. 14.
43. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 26:33.

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ਮੋਹਣੁ ਕਮਲਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਚਉਬਾਰਾ ਮੋਹਰੀ ਮਨਾਇਆ ॥

44. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Sarang*, p. 1244.
ਜਿਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦੁਸਟੁ ਹੈ ਨਕ ਵਢੇ ਨਕ ਵਢਾਇਆ ॥
ਮਹਾ ਕਰੂਪ ਦੁਖੀਏ ਸਦਾ ਕਾਲੇ ਮੁਹ ਮਾਇਆ ॥
ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਨਿਤ ਪਰ ਦਰਬੁ ਹਿਰਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਚੁਰਾਇਆ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਤਿਨ ਕੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਤ ਕਰਹੁ ਰਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇਆ ॥

45. Ibid., *Raag Bilaval*, p. 855.
ਕੋਈ ਨਿੰਦਕੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਸਰਣਿ ਗੁਰ ਆਵੈ ॥
ਪਿਛਲੇ ਗੁਨਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਬਖਸਿ ਲਏ ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਨਾਲਿ ਰਲਾਵੈ ॥

46. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 312.
ਸਾਕਤ ਜਾਇ ਨਿਵਹਿ ਗੁਰ ਆਗੈ ਮਨਿ ਖੋਟੇ ਕੂੜਿ ਕੂੜਿਆਰੇ ॥
ਜਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਕਹੈ ਉਠਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ਬਹਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਘੁਸਰਿ ਬਗੁਲਾਰੇ ॥

47. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 305.
ਸਚਿਆਰ ਸਿਖ ਬਹਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪਾਸਿ ਘਾਲਨਿ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਨ ਲਭਨੀ ਕਿਤੈ ਥਾਇ ਭਾਲੇ ॥
ਜਿਨਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੁਖਾਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਤਿਨਾ ਮੁਹ ਭਲੇਰੇ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਦਯਿ ਗਾਲੇ ॥ ... ...
ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਕਨਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਲਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਦੇਵੈ ਇਕਿ ਆਪੇ ਵਖਿ ਕਢੈ ਠਗਵਾਲੇ ॥੧॥

48. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 317.
ਵਿਣੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜਿ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਪਾਸਹੁ ਕੰਮੁ ਕਰਾਇਆ
ਲੋੜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਨੇੜਿ ਨਾ ਆਵੈ ॥ ... ...
ਜਿ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਮਨੁ ਮੰਨੇ ਕੰਮੁ ਕਰਾਏ ਸੋ ਜੰਤੁ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥੨॥

49. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 307.
ਧੁਰਿ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੂਰੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਸੋਈ ਹੁਣਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਮਾਰੇ ॥
ਜੇ ਮੇਲਣ ਨੋ ਬਹੁਤੇਰਾ ਲੋਚੀਐ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਮਿਲਣ ਕਰਤਾਰੇ ॥
ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਢੋਈ ਨ ਲਹਨਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਗੁਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੇ ॥
ਕੋਈ ਜਾਇ ਮਿਲੈ ਹੁਣਿ ਓਨਾ ਨੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਮੁ ਜੰਦਾਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰਿ ਬਾਬੈ ਫਿਟਕੇ ਸੇ ਫਿਟੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਅੰਗਦਿ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰਿ ਤੀਜੀ ਪੀੜੀ ਵੀਚਾਰਿਆ ਕਿਆ ਹਥਿ ਏਨਾ ਵੇਚਾਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰਿ ਚਉਥੀ ਪੀੜੀ ਟਿਕਿਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਨਿੰਦਕੁ ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਿ ਤਾਰੇ ॥

50. See reference no. 38.

51. *Parchian Sewa Das*, p. 67.

52. The said colophon recorded in the beginning of said *pothi* is as follows :
ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੰਮਤ ੧੬੫੨ ਮਾਘ ਵਦੀ ੧ ਪੋਥੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਬਿਰ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਮ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ਨਿਰਭਓ ਨਿਰੀਕਾਰ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਓ ।੧। ਏਹ ਬਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਦੀਆ ਸੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦੁ ਨੈ ਅਗੈ ਦੀਆ ਸੈ ਤਿਹਾ ਪੀੜੀਆ ਦੀਆ ਸੈ ਜਿ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਲਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਏਗਾ ਸੋ ਜੀਵਣ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋਗ ਤਿਸ ਦੇ ਦੋਵੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਵਰਨਿਗੇ ਸੁਖਾਲਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿਤੈ ਗਲੈ ਥੁੜੀਆਗੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਸ ਜਾਵਗੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਹੈ ਏਸ ਮਹਿ ਸਹਿਸਾ ਸੁਭਾ ਮੂਲਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਏਹ ਗਲੁ ਵਰਿ ਜਾਨਣੀ । ਜਿ ਕੋਈ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਹਡੀ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਛਡਿ ਕੈ ਦੁਯੈ ਲਗੈਗਾ ਸੋ ਆਵਸਿ ਨਰਕਿ ਜਾਇਗੁ ।

53. Sri Guru Ram Das had remarked about Pirthi Chand's behaviour in the following words :
ਕਾਹੇ ਪੂਤ ਝਗਰਤ ਹਉ ਸੰਗਿ ਬਾਪ ॥
ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਜਣੇ ਬਡੀਰੇ ਤੁਮ ਹਉ ਤਿਨ ਸਿਉ ਝਗਰਤ ਪਾਪ ॥੧॥
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Sarang*, p. 1200)

54. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 26:33.
Dabistan-i-Mazahib, p. 61. *Mina* literally means deceitful or hypocrite. *Mina* is also a criminal tribe found in Rajasthan. They are professional thieves and notorious for indulging in robbery and dacoity. See *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, (ed. H.A. Rose), Vol. III, pp. 102-103.

55. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Asa*, p. 366.

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ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਧੜਾ ਕੀਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਸੁਤ ਨਾਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥
ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਧੜਾ ਕੀਆ ਕੁੜਮ ਸਕੇ ਨਾਲਿ ਜਵਾਈ ॥
ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਧੜਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਿਕਦਾਰ ਚਉਧਰੀ ਨਾਲਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਸੁਆਈ ॥

56. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 366.
ਜਿਨ ਸਿਉ ਧੜੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਸੇ ਜਾਹਿ ॥ ਝੂਠੁ ਧੜੇ ਕਰਿ ਪਛੋਤਾਹਿ ॥
ਥਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹਹਿ ਮਨਿ ਖੋਟੁ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥ ਹਮ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਧੜਾ ਕੀਆ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਕੋਈ ਸਮਰਥੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
57. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 1135.
ਤਿਨ ਚੂਕੀ ਮੁਹਤਾਜੀ ਲੋਕਨ ਕੀ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਗੀਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥੨॥
ਮਤਾ ਮਸੂਰਤਿ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਕੀਜੈ ਜੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ॥
Also see *Raag Wadhans*, p. 591; and *Raag Bilawal*, p. 851.
58. See the chapter on Guru Amar Das.
59. Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 345.
60. Latif, Syad Muhammad : *History of the Punjab*, p. 252.
Narang, Gokal Chand : *Transformation of Sikhism*, pp. 27-28.
61. See reference no. 18.

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8

NANAK V — SRI GURU ARJUN DEV

Sri Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Guru, was an excellent organiser. To spread Sikhism, he founded the towns of Tarn Taran, Chheharta and Hargobindpur in Bari Doab, and Kartarpur in Jalandhar Doab. He compiled the *Adi Granth* — the Sikh scripture. The Sikh worldview that man is just a medium to achieve the goal set by *Waheguru*, is manifested in the concluding verse of the Sikh scripture :

> I have appreciated not what thou has done for me, O Lord !
> Thou hast made me worthy of Thy Service.
> In me, meritless one, there is no virtue
> Thou of Thy own self, O My Lord, hast taken pity on me.[1]

Bhat Mathura thus rightly points out another aspect of the Sikh thought in the life of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, that when one lives life in accordance with His Will, then there remains no difference between *Waheguru* and His creature :

> Sri Guru Arjun Dev is the veritable embodiment of God.[2]

Sri Guru Arjun Dev saw the light of the day at Goindwal on April 15, 1563 CE. Sikh sources provide sketchy knowledge about his early childhood. According to Sikh tradition, Sri Guru Amar Das, his maternal grandfather, discerned in him a rare creative genius and an uncommon spiritual bent of mind. One day, the Guru amused with his unusual ways, remarked that he would grow up to be a great person.[3] Sikh tradition states that Sri Guru Amar Das had also predicted that this grandson would become the ship of emancipation to ferry the masses across the ocean of life.[4] It reveals that Sri Guru Amar Das was much impressed with Sri Guru Arjun Dev's devotion to scriptures and his intuitive understanding of the *bani* of the Sikh Gurus. He had not only acquired proper knowledge in *Gurbani* tradition, but had also imbibed its spirit to take it to the masses. Bhat Kalsahar, whose compositions in praise of the Sikh Gurus are enshrined in the Sikh scripture, hails Sri Guru Arjun Dev as a born Guru :

> You, O Arjun ! Have experienced God,
> As well as the wisdom of the Guru since your very birth.[5]

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Thus even in his childhood Sri Guru Arjun Dev was a profoundly religious person, and fully understood the theological aspects of the Sikh faith. As he had been reared and taught under the watchful eyes of Sri Guru Amar Das and later on of Sri Guru Ram Das, the child Sri Guru Arjun Dev grasped the essence of *Gurbani*, and acquired familiarity with the affairs of the Sikh faith and its rich spiritual inheritance, a blessing that eminently qualified him for the spiritual throne.

The Sikh tradition is silent about the life of Sri Guru Arjun Dev prior to his ascension to Sri Guru Nanak Dev's throne. One can imagine, however, that being close to the third and fourth Masters he had observed the functioning of the Sikh mission from very close quarters. The organizational and institutional set up of Sikhism, established at Goindwal and Ramdaspur, was in his full knowledge. Similarly, he was aware of the hostility, internal as well as external, that had posed a challenge to the growth of Sikhism. We find that his commitment to the ideals of the Sikh faith and his dedication to carry out the commands of his father-Guru had endeared him to the Sikh *sangat*. It seems he was actively involved in the organization of the Sikh movement, and had come to occupy an important position at the Guru's court at Ramdaspur. Occasionally, Sri Guru Ram Das would depute Sri Guru Arjun Dev to represent him at socio-religious functions.[6] Sri Guru Arjun Dev's spiritual bent of mind, his amiable and gentle disposition, and his devotion to service of the Sikh mission impressed the *sangat* everywhere.

Arjun had two elder brothers, Pirthi Chand and Mahadev. The former was totally profane and had a wily nature, while the latter had adopted an otherworldly attitude, and remained indifferent to social responsibilities, an attitude that does not conform with *Sikhi*.[7] Being the eldest son of the fourth Master, Pirthi Chand considered himself the rightful heir to guruship. He was extremely selfish, and had no scruples to enter into any unprincipled alliance to promote his cause. Since Sri Guru Arjun Dev had come to enjoy the trust of his father as well as the admiration of the Sikhs, Pirthi Chand looked upon him as his rival. Knowing full well that he was no match to Sri Guru Arjun Dev in service and devotion to the Guru, Pirthi Chand took to subterfuge to rule out Arjun Dev in the matter of ascension to guruship. Pirthi Chand had made his stand publically known that he was keen to succeed his father. When towards the last days of Guru Ram Das' pontificate the issue of *gurgaddi* came to a head, Pirthi Chand had become so impatient that he turned querulous and would pick up feuds with his father, Guru Ram Das, over trifles.[8]

In April 1580 CE, Sahari Mal, a cousin of Sri Guru Ram Das, invited him to Lahore to grace the occasion of his son's marriage. At that time, it was not possible for the Guru to move out of Ramdaspur. However, he agreed to send one of his sons to attend the marriage on his behalf. According to the Sikh tradition, when Sri Guru Ram Das asked Pirthi Chand to go to Lahore, he declined on the pretext that his services were indispensable to the proper functioning of the central Sikh establishment at Ramdaspur. Actually, he did not want to leave Ramdaspur lest Sri Guru Ram Das should appoint Sri Guru Arjun Dev or someone else as the next Guru in his absence.

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Similarly, Mahadev also refused to comply with the Guru's command as he had no interest in worldly affairs. At last, in compliance with the wishes of his father, Sri Guru Arjun Dev left for Lahore with instructions that until he was called back, he should stay there.[9] We are told that after attending the marriage of his cousin, Sri Guru Arjun Dev utilized his time to preach the message of Sikhism in and around Lahore. Months passed like this, yet he received no call from his father to return to Ramdaspur. He patiently suffered the pangs of separation, and after many ardent prayers, he got the permission of the Guru to return to Ramdaspur.[10] The earlier messages could not reach the Guru as the letters of (Guru) Arjun Dev, seeking permission, had been intercepted by Pirthi Chand. After waiting for a few days, Sri Guru Arjun Dev penned another letter which again met the same fate. Thereafter he wrote another letter with the strict instructions to the messenger that the letter should be delivered only to the Guru, and none else. After going through the contents, Sri Guru Ram Das noticed that the letter in hand was third in the series. He enquired from Pirthi Chand about the earlier letters, who pretended ignorance.[11] However, when Pirthi Chand's place was searched, Sri Guru Ram Das found the letters and remarked "what a crooked (*mina*) fellow you are !" The above incident establishes beyond doubt that Pirthi Chand was utterly unfit for the high office of guruship, whereas Sri Guru Arjun Dev had proved his worth.

The political scenario at the time of Sri Guru Arjun Dev's succession to guruship on September 2, 1581 CE, was reasonably liberal. Emperor Akbar had proclaimed his *Din-i-Ilahi*, and this eclectic religion diminished the influence of orthodox Islam on the personality of the Emperor and was to give a different direction to his statecraft in the days to come.[12] It dampened the crusading zeal of fundamentalists who believed that the duty of a Mughal emperor was to spread Islam with a firm sword, and started a campaign for the revivalism of Islam. They made a common cause with the disgruntled Mughal nobles and tried to arouse the standard of *jehad*, but failed.[13] The political developments in Kabul, coupled with the problem of North Western territories, had necessitated Emperor Akbar to march to Lahore. Thereafter, from 1585-1598 CE, Lahore remained the imperial headquarters.[14] While encamping in and around Lahore, Emperor Akbar was successful in annexing the provinces of Kabul and Kashmir to the Mughal Empire. Besides restoring normalcy in the area, he re-established the Mughal authority over the hill chiefs of Punjab.[15] Although at the periphery of the Mughal Empire there were some disturbances, yet the Punjab remained free of any internal disorder.

Unfortunately, due to scarcity of rain a draught-like situation prevailed over Punjab. The Mughal chronicles reveal that from 1595 CE to 1598 CE there was an acute shortage of corn and people were starving.[16] Besides, an epidemic had broken out in the province which claimed countless lives in the cities and towns. To overcome the suffering caused by these natural calamities, relief works were urgently required, to which Emperor Akbar responded in an earnest way.[17]

Though, the political environment was congenial to the development and spread

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of Sikhism, yet internal situation was quite disturbing. Like the earlier claimants to guruship, Pirthi Chand did not reconcile himself to the succession of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Being the elder son of Sri Guru Ram Das, Pirthi Chand enjoyed some regard among the Sikhs, for he had been one of the important functionaries who managed the religious affairs at Ramdaspur. He had personal rapport with some of the *masands* who mattered in running the Sikh affairs. To set aside Sri Guru Arjun Dev from the seat of guruship or to usurp it he worked out various strategies. Besides appropriating a large portion of the offerings at the central Sikh shrine, he won over some of the leading *masands* to his side, and this dissension threw the entire organizational set-up of the Sikh community into disarray.

Also, Pirthi Chand approached the local authorities for support to his claim to guruship on the basis of the law of primogeniture, which favours the eldest son as the rightful heir to his father's seat.[18] The *chaudhris* of Ramdaspur wanted to solve the crisis by way of goodwill, humility, and forgiveness. We do not exactly know as to how Pirthi Chand was allowed to appropriate the income from house property as well as the agricultural produce of the *Guru ka Chak*.[19] According to Khushwaqat Rai (*Tarikh-i Sikhan*), Sri Guru Arjun Dev also allowed his elder brother the income from terminal tax of Chowk Passian, Amritsar.

Meanwhile, Bhai Gurdas, who had been entrusted to preach Sikhism at Agra, returned and had an audience with the Guru at Ramdaspur.[20] He was aghast to observe that the *masands* had been divided into two opposite camps and that the offerings of the Sikhs, due to the machinations of Pirthi Chand, did not reach the Guru. The institution of *langar* was also going through difficulties. Bhai Gurdas, in association with Baba Budha, exhorted the devoted Sikhs to educate the Sikh *sangats* about the sinister designs of Pirthi Chand and his associates.[21] This infused a new spirit in Sikhs and *sangats* began to adorn the Guru's court. Thus having overcome the internal hassles Sri Guru Arjun Dev was free to devote his time to the organisational affairs that demanded urgent attention. Firstly, he took over the project of water-tanks that had been left unfinished after the death of the fourth Nanak. In 1584 CE, he resumed the digging of Santokhsar tank to complete it in 1588 CE.[22] Thereafter, he supervised the masonary work to brick line the steps of *amrit sarovar*[23] for the facility of the devotees, who were turning out in good numbers, to have a dip in the sacred tank. Besides, Sri Guru Arjun Dev conceived the idea of Harmandir in the middle of the tank, which is a living tribute to his creative genius.[24] He sought to make it a place of worship for all people. According to Sikh tradition, he invited Mian Mir, a renowned Sufi Saint of Lahore, to lay the foundation of the Harmandir.[25] We find that by founding the Harmandir on the lower plinth, Sri Guru Arjun Dev seems to have harmonized its architecture with the Sikh ethos which assert that "what is humble shall be exalted."[26]

Unlike the Hindu and Muslim places of worship, Harmandir is open in all the four directions implying that on the basis of caste and creed there would be no restriction on the people coming to pay their obeisance. When the work of the tank and the

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temple were nearing completion there was a sense of joy and enthusiasm among the Sikhs. Sri Guru Arjun Dev in his characteristic manner was overwhelmed with gratitude to Almighty, which is expressed in the following hymn :

God has Himself descended to perform the job
on behalf of His devotees.
How beautiful looks the tank and the nectar-like water in it.
The nectar-water flowing in the pool has made the whole
work look fascinating.
All my yearnings have now found fulfilment.
There is rejoicing all around over the accomplishment of tank,
and all my anxieties have gone.

Sri Guru Arjun Dev goes on to remark that all the obstacles that had come up in the path had been removed. He, in his humble way, was all grateful to God that :

He has completed what was His own work.
It is all due to the blessing of Almighty,
otherwise what could a poor mortal like me achieve without His help ?[27]

Of course, there were hindrances in the completion of the noble task. When the work was in progress there had been impediments due to the interference of Pirthi Chand. Sri Guru Arjun Dev's apprehension in this connection and his gratitude towards God find reflection in the following words :

The Lord-Creator Himself stood to aid us; so not a hair on the head was hurt.
Fruitfully completed was the bath by the Master's Grace :
By utterance of the Name Divine were all sins shed.[28]

The scriptural evidence from the pen of Sri Guru Arjun Dev affirms that the temple of God (*Harmandir*) amidst the pool had been completed for the devotees to sing the praises of Almighty.[29] We also find that besides his residence, Sri Guru Arjun Dev had also laid out a garden at Ramdaspur.[30] With the Guru taking up his residence at Ramdaspur, some of the Sikh traders followed the Guru and settled in the new town. Moreover, a bazaar had also come up there and subsequently it flourished into a thickly populated town which according to Sri Guru Arjun Dev had no parallel on earth.[31] Apart from a place of Sikh settlement, it became a centre of trade, for it was a gateway to Kabul and Kandahar.

To mobilise financial resources and to regulate their flow were the immediate tasks before the Guru. With rapid increase in the number of Sikhs visiting Ramdaspur, the daily consumption of food at *langar* had increased cosiderably. To replenish the financial resources, Sri Guru Arjun Dev introduced some innovations in the organisational set-up of the Sikh mission. In place of the usual voluntary donations (*dan*) he introduced the custom of *daswandh*, which has been misunderstood by some scholars as a regular tax similar to that of the Mughal State.[32] *Daswandh*, i.e., one tenth of one's earnings, was institutionalised as a religious obligation in place of the earlier *dan*, which Sikhs voluntarily paid as their contribution towards the cause of their faith.[33] To collect *daswandh* from the Sikhs, Sri Guru Arjun Dev re-organised the

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masand system that had in some cases been corrupted by the machinations of the Minas. He appointed his devoted Sikhs in different areas and cities, and entrusted them with the dual responsibility of preaching Sikh precepts and collecting offerings from the Sikhs. The *masands*, as they were called, were the representatives of the Guru performing their religious duties in the areas assigned to them. They were asked to visit the Guru at Ramdaspur on the *Vaisakhi* festival to submit their accounts.[34] The contemporary sources inform that the *masands* used to visit Ramdaspur annually at the head of their respective *sangats* to have an audience with the Guru. Sri Guru Arjun Dev used to confer robes of honour on the *masands* in recognition of their services to the cause of the Sikh faith.[35] Some of the Sikh sources indicate that Sri Guru Arjun Dev encouraged Sikhs to take up occupations without any caste prejudice. In addition to agriculture, trade and *chakri* (service) were the other two main occupations in which Sikhs were engaged at that time.[36] Contemporary sources reveal that the Sikh traders had established themselves at major trade centres, especially on the route connecting north-eastern India to the central and west Asian countries.[37] Significantly, Sikhs had taken up trading in horses in a big way which had made them adventurous and rich to contribute towards the economic well being of the Sikh *Panth*.

Sri Guru Arjun Dev's efforts to pacify Pirthi Chand did not prove of much avail. He continued to harbour ill-will against the Guru. The compromise arrived at earlier was more apparent than real. Sri Guru Arjun Dev continued to face persistent hostility from Pirthi Chand.

Meharban, son of Pirthi Chand, according to the author of *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, grew up under the tutelage of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. The literary work he was able to accomplish, he did under his pen-name "Nanak Das", but he never called himself Guru.[38] He always called himself *bhagat*, as has been specifically stated by the contemporary author of *Dabistan*. After his death, however, his followers began to hail him as guru.[39]

Gurpartap Suraj Granth states that Pirthi Chand left Ramdaspur for the village Hehar in district Lahore. Bhai Gurdas went there to effect reconciliation between him and Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Being the maternal uncle of both the brothers, Bhai Gurdas thought he could bring him round, but Pirthi Chand showed scant regard for Bhai Gurdas, who was constrained to depict the true character of Pirthi Chand and his followers, the Minas, in his *Var* 36.[40]

The Minas were creating a wedge among Sikhs, and it was in this context that Bhai Gurdas in his compositions asserted that Mina hypocrisy would never succeed in weaning away the Sikhs from their Guru and the faith.[41] It seems the local Mughal functionaries, out of jealousy at the growing popularity of the Guru, connived with Pirthi Chand to undermine the Guru's position.[42] The alliance partners were so active in their campaign that they even filed a petition against Sri Guru Arjun Dev before the Emperor. Though the nature of the exact allegations against Sri Guru Arjun Dev is not known, it clearly indicates the fact that some Mughal officials harboured ill-will against the Guru.

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However, due to the Emperor's *Sulah-Kul* policy and his cordial relations with the predecessors of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, the Mughal officials were reluctant to meddle openly in the internal affairs of the Sikh *Panth*. Anyway, the atmosphere at Ramdaspur, chiefly because of the hostile activities of the Minas, was rife with intrigues and the Sikh *Panth* suffered a serious internal crisis.

Sri Guru Arjun Dev was an excellent organiser and a great visionary. Instead of sticking to Ramdaspur he set on a missionary travel to the hinterlands of the central Punjab. But before his departure, aware of the hostile attitude of the nexus between the Minas and the Mughal officials, he shifted his family to Wadali, a village at the outskirts of Ramdaspur. He then visited Khadur, Goindwal, Sarhali, Chohla, Bhaini, Khanpur, Khara, etc., and everywhere he received an overwhelming response from the people of the area.[43] Having established his personal contacts with the Sikhs of *Majha*, Sri Guru Arjun Dev thought of a religious centre to consolidate Sikhism in the area. Consequently, he conceived the town of Tarn Taran, where, unlike Ramdaspur, he brooked no interference from the Minas. It seems, while selecting the site for Tarn Taran, Sri Guru Arjun Dev had kept in mind various factors. It was situated on the Grand Trunk road connecting Delhi to Lahore. There was no other centre of note of both the Hindus and the Muslims, which could have come in its way in attracting the people to Sikhism. Water was abundantly available as a water channel flowed nearby. The *pargana* of Patti, of which Tarn Taran formed a part, was famous for horse breeding.[44] Keeping in view all these factors, the founding of Tarn Taran was of far-reaching significance. After acquiring the land in 1590 CE, Sri Guru Arjun Dev began the excavation of the tank which he named as Tarn Taran, pool to deliver from sufferings.[45] He desired to pave its step with burnt bricks but the project had to be abandoned, for Noor Din, a local Mughal official, forcibly took away the bricks meant for the pool to build his *serai*.[46] However, the newly dug tank of Tarn Taran soon became a centre of activities of the *Panth*.[47]

In accordance with his policy to provide new centres for the Sikhs, in 1594 CE Sri Guru Arjun Dev founded the town of Kartarpur, 'the abode of God'.[48] It was situated in the Bist Doab and played an important role in the consolidation of Sikhism in the area. Similarly, in the Upper Bari Doab, Sri Guru Arjun Dev established another centre on the banks of river Beas and named it Hargobindpur after the name of his son Hargobind.[49] Sri Guru Arjun Dev also toured the countryside of Nakka to visit Khemkaran, Chunian and other villages where he attracted many persons to the fold of Sikhism.[50] After staying for sometime at Jambar, Sri Guru Arjun Dev proceeded to Lahore to preach the precepts of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. During his stay at Lahore Sri Guru Arjun Dev built a *baoli* in the Dabbi Bazaar.[51] The emergence of these centres indicates that Sri Guru Arjun Dev's following was fairly widespread. As a result of his missionary tours in the central Punjab, Sri Guru Arjun Dev was successful to stem the detrimental impact of the Minas. In fact, the rapid expansion of the Sikh mission within and outside Punjab can very well be attributed to the genius of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, his extensive tours and the new centres and townships founded by him.

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Moreover, he desired to alleviate sufferings of the people, who were the victims of natural calamities like famine and plague in the province. The traditional Sikh sources reveal that wherever Sri Guru Arjun Dev went, he undertook the task of digging wells and tanks there. In the backdrop of famine, above projects assume significance, for they helped the people to overcome the shortage of water. It seems Sri Guru Arjun Dev had converted the newly founded city of Tarn Taran into a major relief camp. Besides, running a free kitchen for the famine stricken people, he was gracious enough to open an asylum for the patients of plague.[52] Thus true to its name, Tarn Taran saved many people from the miseries caused by natural calamities. Circumstantial evidence indicates that the Guru remained there for a considerable period of time preaching as well as organising relief works in and around Tarn Taran. We are informed that towards the end of 1598 CE, due to the movement of the royal camp from Lahore to Agra, there was a steep fall in prices of grain. The peasantry of the area found it difficult to pay the revenue fixed at previous rates.[53] The Mughal chronicles reveal that Emperor Akbar on his way back to Delhi decided to make a brief halt at Goindwal to meet Sri Guru Arjun Dev on November 24, 1598 CE.[54] We are further told that Sri Guru Arjun Dev interceded with the emperor on behalf of the people and persuaded him to order one fifth reduction in the revenue target of the province.[55] It indicates that Sri Guru Arjun Dev, besides being a religious leader, was a true representative of the people, who could take up their problems with the authorities. Verily, Sri Guru Arjun Dev had come to be recognised as the rightful and indisputable leader of the Sikh *Panth*. It was a serious setback to the Minas, as they could no more prevent him from entering Ramdaspur. Probably at this stage Pirthi Chand and his associates voluntarily retired to Hehar, a village near Lahore, to establish a parallel centre to that of Ramdaspur to preach their own creed as parallel to Sikhism.[56]

Having taken full control of Ramdaspur, Sri Guru Arjun Dev soon turned it into a major religio-spiritual centre, where instead of enmity a reign of humility had descended.[57] As a natural corollary of the Minas leaving Ramdaspur, the Sikhs and traders had a free access to it. Evidence at hand suggests that unlike the Minas, under the pontificate of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, there was no tax collector and nothing of the sort of *jaziya* or fine was levied on the citizens of Ramdaspur.[58] Verily, an atmosphere akin to the kingdom of God had come to prevail at Ramdaspur.[59]

Like his predecessors Sri Guru Arjun Dev is credited with enriching the Sikh scriptural tradition in more than one way. Employing various *raags* and metres he composed about 2218 hymns, the single largest contribution by any Sikh Guru to the scripture of the Sikhs.[60] It has been observed that a considerable number of his hymns are devoted to truthful living, wherein significance of *Naam* as an antidote to all the sufferings of everyday life has been emphasised. His *Sukhmani* is a masterpiece of mystical poetry in which elements of Sikh spirituality have been explained in a lucid and lyrical style. A sick soul can easily achieve a healthy transformation by following the mystical path as laid down in *Sukhmani*. It has been aptly remarked that some of the finest lyrics of Sri Guru Arjun Dev merge gradually into lay piety, and

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topical verses unnoticeably rise to the sublime.[61] Sri Guru Arjun Dev, in putting the revelation into words, uses shorter verse-forms (*dupadas, chaupadas*) which had become popular with the masses and thus added to the appeal of Sikhism.[62] His singular contribution relates to the compilation of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib that he undertook after his return to Ramdaspur, probably in the early 1599 CE.

There is no doubt that Pirthi Chand desired to usurp the guruship, and as a part of his strategy, his son Meharban had started composing poetry under the pen-name Nanak or Nanak Das.[63] Meharban was a prolific writer whose literary works speak volumes of his hard work. According to Kesar Singh Chhibber, Meharban had compiled a *granth*, a sort of scripture, in which besides hymns of the Sikh Gurus, writings composed by him had been included.[64] Further, he states that Meharban had employed professional scribes to prepare the copies of the Granth for circulation.[65] We find that due to internal crisis the masands, the professional musicians such as *ragis, rabbabis, dooms* and *bhatts* had been divided into two camps.[66] Consequently, some of the *ragis* while performing *kirtan* had started singing *kachi-bani* that had its origin with Meharban."[67] Obviously, threat to corrupt the originality of *Gurbani* was real and very serious.

Thus, to purge the entry of *kachi bani* in the Sikh scriptural tradition, Sri Guru Arjun Dev decided to compile the genuine hymns. For this purpose, he selected a quiet place, Ramsar, in Amritsar, and with Bhai Gurdas as scribe, organised all the available hymns in one volume known as the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In this volume all the hymns of the earlier Gurus besides his own, as well as selected compositions of radical *bhagats* were compiled. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib was formally installed in Darbar Sahib on the 1st August, 1604 CE, with all the deference due to the Word of God. Baba Budha was appointed as the first *granthi* or custodian. This sacred volume, with later addition of the *bani* of the ninth Nanak, was to be declared the Eternal Guru by Sri Guru Gobind Singh on the 6th October, 1708 CE. This subject is dealt with at greater length in chapter 18.

The codification of Sikh canon in the form of *Adi Granth* was undoubtedly an important landmark in the history of the Sikhs. It soon replaced all other collections of *bani* to become the sole sacred book of the Sikhs. Besides, serving as a source of divine wisdom, it conferred on the Sikhs a distinct identity of their own.[68] However, the orthodox elements within the Hindu community were really upset over the emergence of a definitive edition of the Sikh sacred text. Sikh tradition states that a deputation of Sikhs came to Sri Guru Arjun Dev to submit that the Brahmins had urged them that instead of *Gurbani* they should peruse the Sanskrit texts, or they would suffer ostracism.[69] Similarly, some of the orthodox Muslims were suspicious of the contents of the Sikh scripture. They complained to the emperor that Sri Guru Arjun Dev had compiled a scripture in which the Muslims and their Prophet were spoken of with contempt.[70] However, on examining the contents of the Sikh scripture, instead of getting displeased, the Emperor was very much impressed by the message contained in it.[71] These factors suggest that the veneration that the Sikhs were displaying towards *Adi Granth*, in their daily congregations, was really an eyesore to

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the fanatic Muslims and Hindus. Although we do not know exactly the nature of the allegations levelled against the Guru, we know that a petition signed by some persons was filed before a high ranking Mughal dignitary, probably, Emperor Akbar. Sri Guru Arjun Dev in his compositions refers to the petition and its outcome in the following words :

> God has Himself intervened to prove that the petition is false
> and the sinner is down with a curse.
> He who is helped by God cannot be harmed by anyone.
> He who tells lies in the true court is bound to be discomfited.
> God has Himself acted as judge. The complainant suffered for his deeds.
> God, my Creator protects the honour of those who seek His refuge.[72]

Sri Guru Arjun Dev also refers to a meeting he had had with a high ranking Mughal dignitary. Since the detractors were carrying a slanderous campaign against Sri Guru Arjun Dev, there was anxiety about the outcome of the meeting. However, as the Guru says, God was gracious enough to set things right. He remarks that God came to help His devotee, whereas the wicked stood humbled. Sri Guru Arjun Dev does not mention the place of the meeting. He, however, adds that God helped him safely return home (Ramdaspur), and that the faces of his detractors were blackened.[73]

We observe that whatever experience he had had with the Mughal officials, in relation to his rivals, was not gratifying in any way. He says that meeting with the *panches* had not been helpful in allaying his apprehension. Similarly, the nobles were of no avail to solve the dispute.[74] Sikh chroniclers are unanimous that Pirthi Chand had a formidable ally in Sulhi Khan at the Mughal court at Lahore. It is said that Pirthi Chand, in connivance with Sulhi Khan, had hatched a conspiracy to imprison Sri Guru Arjun Dev and to harm his person.[75] When the Sikhs came to know about it, they were highly perturbed. Obviously, a sense of insecurity descended over them. Sri Guru Arjun Dev makes reference to one such attack on him :

> At first was mooted sending a communication.
> Secondly, was given the advice to dispatch two messengers.
> The third counsel was some other effort to make.
> But discarding all else, Lord ! on Thee alone I meditated.
> With this resolve was I in supreme bliss, freed from anxiety, and in poise rested.
> Destroyerd were foes and ill-wishers, and joy I obtained.
> The holy Preceptor thus has instructed me :
> This life and body all is the Lord's property.
> All by Thy might alone happens —
> Thou my selter, my tribunal of justice.
> Discarding Thee, Lord ! where may we go ?
> None else Thy equal.[76]

According to the Sikh tradition when Sulhi Khan was on his way to Ramdaspur to harm the Guru, his horse got frightened by the accidental flight of a bird nearby and ran into a live brick kiln. Sulhi Khan fell into the jaws of fire and was reduced to

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ashes.[77] Sri Guru Arjun Dev expressed a sense of gratitude to the Lord thus :

Lord ! from Sulahi grant protection.
Unable to accomplish anything is Sulahi —
An unclean death has he met.
The Lord brandishing the axe his head cut off,
And in an instant dust he became.
Contemplating evil is he burnt; the Creator has to his death pushed him.[78]

Some of the detractors of the Guru belonged to the ruling elite. Taking note of the activities of such officials, Sri Guru Arjun Dev remarks :

Whoever over the humble and the meek vows to tyrannize,
The Supreme Lord in flames burns him.
The Creator perfect justice dispenses, and preserves His devotee.[79]

At another place the Guru observes :

My traducer by Divine Grace is turned away.
By Grace of the Lord, Supreme Being, by *Naam*'s arrow is his head cut off.
Snare of death and Yama at us cannot cast their glance,
As the path of truth we have adopted.
The wealth of God's precious Name have we acquired,
That by consuming and spending knows r ot decrease.
In an instant to ashes was he turned, receiving retribution for his deeds.[80]

Sri Guru Arjun Dev refers to one such person who was always given to tall claims. It was out of sheer greed that he had picked enmity with the Guru. Before this man could harm the Guru, providence removed the man from the face of the earth.[81]

Since Pirthi Chand was interested in appropriating the guruship, the birth of Sri Guru Arjun Dev's son, Hargobind in 1595 CE, was a set-back to his plans. He became all the more vengeful and aggressive in his designs. The Sikh chronicles describe a series of foiled attempts that Pirthi Chand had covertly made to eliminate Hargobind in his infancy.[82] One such attempt finds mention in the compositions of Sri Guru Arjun Dev where he states that commissioned by his rivals, an evil-minded Brahmin attempted to administer poison to Hargobind. However, by the grace of God, Hargobind was saved, whereas the wicked Brahmin died of pain in his stomach.[83] The Sikh tradition informs that after the death of Sulhi Khan, Pirthi Chand found another friend in Chandu Shah. Although the Mughal chronicles are silent about him, yet the Sikh sources refer to him as the *diwan* of Lahore. Since his proposal for Hargobind's hand for his daughter was spurned by Sri Guru Arjun Dev, Chandu turned hostile to him.[84] The Minas and their collaborators, especially the Mughal officials, highly jealous of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, joined hands to harm the Guru at all costs. On the other hand, Sri Guru Arjun Dev was not a person to seek the support and protection of Mughal authorities. He had full faith in the succour of the Lord who looks after His devotees. Whenever there had been a crisis, he had always anchored his faith on God.[85]

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Thus, history is a witness that Sri Guru Arjun Dev had to face hostility and danger from his rivals and their allies throughout his life. Pirthi Chand and his associates, popularly known as Minas, were keen to usurp guruship at any cost. Having failed in their machinations, they established their own *gurgaddi* and tried to cause a rift in the Sikh *Panth*. Some provincial level Mughal officials like Sulhi Khan, Noor Din, and Chandu Shah harboured a strong sense of jealousy against the Guru for his influence amongst the masses. To undermine his position, they had no scruples to help the Minas, covertly or overtly. Thus, a nexus between the rival claimants for guruship and the jealousy-stricken Mughal officials had been formed to malign the Guru and his mission in the eyes of the emperor. The Sikh doctrines and mode of worship had struck at the very roots of the Brahminical system. *Adi Granth* and its veneration as the mode of Sikh spirituality rendered all the Brahminical texts totally irrelevant to the Sikh *Panth*. The large scale conversion to the new faith was a matter of concern to the conservative Hindus, especially the priestly class of the Brahmins whose survival was dependent on casteism and ritualism. Obviously, with the spread of Sikhism the priestly class in the Punjab suffered a set-back, and feared extinction. The Hindu priestly class, therefore, urged the orthodox Hindus to boycott the Sikhs. Similarly, some of the fanatic Muslims were also not well disposed towards the spread of the Sikh faith. The were highly perturbed to see some Muslims turn over towards the new faith. The Muslims, who thought that it was their prerogative to convert others to Islam, were shocked to see that the Sikh faith attracted Muslims too, and that the Sufis shared affinities with the teachings of the Sikh Masters. They felt apprehensive that a rival religion had emerged to challenge the authority of Islam, which would check the Islamisation process of the followers of Mohammed.

Although the odds were heavy, the Guru kept his cool, for he had reposed his faith in the protection of the Lord, and he continued his missionary activities uninterrupted. Resultantly, under his pontificate also, appeal of Sikhism was not confined to a particular community, but embraced the entire society. No doubt, in comparison to their overall strength in the Punjab, the Khatris and the Jats enjoyed numerical superiority in the *Panth*, other castes and professional groups were also well represented in it. The contemporary Sikh sources confirm that low castes, carpenters, black-smiths, gold-smiths, calico-printers, washermen, potters, bards, chandals, *et cetera*, gladly came into the fold of the Sikh *Panth*.[86] Some high caste Brahmins and Rajputs also embraced the Sikh faith.[87] Some of the *chaudhris* and *zamindars*, who worked for the Mughals at the lower level of administration, also joined the Sikh *Panth*.[88] Some of the Sikhs were in the employ of the Mughals.[89] The followers of Jogis, who worshipped the cult of *Shakti* goddess and *Sakhi Sarvar*, also felt attracted to the path of Sikhism.[90] One Mian Jamal, a Muslim, was among the *Hazuri* Sikhs, who remained ever present in the service of Sri Guru Arjun Dev.[91] According to Bhai Gurdas the greatness of the Guru had spread to all the corners of Punjab.[92] He remarked that the number of Sikhs in and outside the Punjab ran into *lakhs*.[93] The Sikh mission had fanned across the regions as far as Kabul and Kashmir in the north-west and Agra in the east.[94] The author of

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Dabistan-i-Mazahib states that there was hardly any city in the Mughal Empire where some Sikhs were not residing.[95] Obviously, during the guruship of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, Sikhism was not merely confined to Punjab. Within a century of its emergence, it had spread over the subcontinent and beyond its frontiers. People of different lands, belonging to various strata of society, engaged in different professions, responded to the call of Sikhism. It really stood at the threshold of becoming a pan-Indian religious movement.

Meanwhile, Emperor Akbar, whose liberal outlook had protected Sri Guru Arjun Dev from the onslaughts of his enemies, passed away at Agra on October 17, 1605 CE. He was succeeded by his son Sultan Salim under the name of Nur-ud-Din Jehangir. The Mughal chronicles confirm that Emperor Jehangir, before his accession to the royal throne, had never been a puritan Muslim. He was attracted towards Christianity and attempted to learn its fundamentals. He also formed a close friendship with Father Ridolfo Aquaviva, the head of the Christian Mission in the court of Akbar.[96] Prince Salim was also attracted by the Hindu festivals and used to celebrate them with great enthusiasm.[97] These factors clearly indicate that the early Salim was far from bigotry. But soon after his accession to the throne, a change seems to have come about in his attitude towards religion. At the time of his accession to the throne, Jehangir was badly in need of political support. During the last days of Akbar, the atmosphere at the royal court had bec rife with rumours that Salim was likely to be superseded in favour of his son, Khusrau. Besides, some of the leading courtiers were espousing the cause of Khusrau.[98] These developments convinced Salim that to ascend the throne and remain secure on it, he needed the support of his co-religionists. On the other hand, the orthodox Muslim elements, who had already initiated a movement for the revivalism of Islam in India, agreed to support Jehangir in the matter of succession, provided he would patronise the cause of Islam. They had extracted a solemn oath binding Jehangir to defend the Islamic faith against the non-Muslim heathenism.[99] Our sources confirm that the orthodox Muslim leaders, especially the *Naqshbandis*, had developed a close rapport with the Mughal nobles. They wrote letters to Mughal nobles urging them to persuade the emperor to accord due recognition to *Shariat* in the matter of administration.[100] All these pulls and pressures indicate that Mughal State's policy towards the non-Muslims was going through a radical change, which would surely affect the Sikh *Panth* also. The Mughal chronicles affirm that, abetted by some leading Mughal nobles, Khusrau, who desired to succeed his grandfather, was in a mood to revolt against his father, Jehangir. To prevent the prince from taking recourse to rebellion, the emperor had placed him under semi-confinement in the fort of Agra.[101] However, on the pretext to visit his grandfather's tomb, on April 6, 1606 CE, Khusrau slipped out of Agra. Thereafter, he hurried towards Punjab, ostensibly to take possession of the province to lead a successful rebellion against his father. When Jehangir came to know about it, he ordered Sheikh Farid Bukhari to pursue the prince and bring him back dead or alive.[102] Soon after Jehangir himself took charge of the campaign and at the head of a large army, marched

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toward Punjab to follow the Mughal army which was already on the move to pursue the rebel prince.

According to traditional Sikh sources, while on his way to Lahore, Khusrau had a brief halt at Tarn Taran to have an audience with Sri Guru Arjun Dev.[103] Although Jehangir in his autobiography makes reference to Khusrau's meeting with Sri Guru Arjun Dev at Goindwal, yet the sources are not unanimous about the nature of assistance that Sri Guru Arjun Dev rendered to Khusrau at that time. The Mughal chronicles inform that on April 27, 1606 CE, the Mughal forces got hold of Khusrau while he was crossing the river Chenab. Subsequently, on May 1, 1606 CE, he was brought to Lahore to present him before the emperor, who sent him to confinement.[104] When Jehangir was fully in control of the situation and was attending to the administrative matters, on 23rd May a report reached him that Sri Guru Arjun Dev was also guilty of espousing the cause of the rebel prince.[105] Sri Guru Arjun Dev was taken into custody and put into prison at Lahore. Day after day he was subjected to torture and consequently fell a martyr on May 30, 1606 CE. Most of the Sikh chroniclers hold Chandu Shah responsible for influencing the emperor to take such a drastic step against the Guru.[106] According to Prof. Ganda Singh, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi *Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani*, the leader of the Muslim *Naqshbandi* revivalists in Punjab, was equally active against the mission of Sri Guru Arjun Dev.[107] Overjoyed at the death of Sri Guru Arjun Dev , Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi remarks in one of his letters to his devoted follower Sheikh Farid Bukhari Murtaza Khan that the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev was a meritorious act on the part of Jehangir :

> The execution of the accursed *kafir* of Goindwal at this time is a very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus. With whatever intention they are killed and with whatever objective they are destroyed, it is a meritorious act for the Muslims. Before the *kafir* was killed, I had seen in a dream that the emperor of the day had destroyed the crown of the head of *Shirk* (infidelity). It is true that this infidel was the chief of the infidels and a leader of the *kafirs*.[108]

It proves beyond doubt that the *Mujaddid* looked upon Sri Guru Arjun Dev as the chief of the infidels and desired to put a stop to the teachings of the Sikh faith. It lends considerable support to the probability that the complaint against the Guru implicating him in the rebellion of Khusrau might have been made directly or indirectly by some agent of the *Mujaddid*.[109]

Some of the modern historians like Jadu Nath Sarkar hold that "it was clearly not a case of religious persecution but merely the customary punishment of a political offender."[110] Beni Parsad also observes that it was nothing of the sort of religious persecution. He further remarks "without minimizing the gravity of Jehangir's mistake, it is only fair to recognise that the whole affair amounts to a single execution due primarily to political reasons."[111] Another historian finds that the Guru was accused of helping Khusrau. He goes on to conclude that "the emperor disliked the rising power of the Sikhs and wanted to nip this evil in the bud."[112] In fact most of the historians who are not well versed in the Sikh tradition feel that Sri Guru Arjun Dev's complicity

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with rebel prince Khusrau was the sole reason for which he had to face the ordeal ordinarily reserved for political offenders. However, before passing any judgement on the nature of offence that Sri Guru Arjun Dev was accused of committing, one is required to look into the exact role that he had played during the rebellion of Khusrau. Jehangir writes in his autobiography that :

> During the days when Khusrau passed along this road, this insignificant fellow made up his mind to see him and conveyed preconceived things to him and made on his forehead a finger mark in saffron which in Hindi terminology is called *qashqa* (*teeka*) and is considered propitious. When this came to my ears and I came to fully know his heresies, I ordered that he should be brought into my presence and, having handed over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtaza Khan and having confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures.[113]

Obviously, Jehangir considered Sri Guru Arjun Dev guilty of meeting the rebel prince to put a saffron mark on the forehead of the latter. The author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* states that Sri Guru Arjun Dev was arrested for the reason that he had prayed for the welfare of the prince.[114] These accounts present Sri Guru Arjun Dev as a political offender, who was interested in the succession of Prince Khusrau.

We observe that Jehangir was following the Mughal army in pursuit of the rebel prince. On his way from Agra to Lahore, wherever the emperor was informed of the associates of Khusrau, he immediately took cognizance to punish them. For example, he dispatched Sheikh Nizam Thanesari on the pilgrimage of Mecca for his blessing the prince.[115] It is noteworthy that for 27 days from April 26, 1606 CE, when the emperor appears to have crossed Beas at Goindwal and encamped at Jhabal, to May 22, there is no reference whatsoever in the *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri* in anyway involving Sri Guru Arjun Dev in the affairs of Prince Khusrau.[116] In case Sri Guru Arjun Dev had blessed the rebel prince at Goindwal, it would have immediately come to the emperor's notice, and like Sheikh Nizam Thanesari, the Guru would also have been arrested there and then and carried a prisoner to Lahore.[117] Obviously, for about a month, Jehangir had no inkling of Sri Guru Arjun Dev's complicity with Khusrau. As mentioned earlier, the reported meeting between the prince and Sri Guru Arjun Dev had not taken place at the latter's initiative. Thus, on the basis of Khusrau's visit to the Guru, it is not fair to conclude that the latter was a political offender. Sri Guru Arjun Dev had no personal reason whatsoever to oppose the emperor and espouse the cause of Khusrau. No reference of any kind of complicity between the Guru and Khusrau prior to the so-called meeting has come to the notice of historians so far. Similarly, there had been no opportunity of a meeting between the two where, as alleged by the emperor, they could have discussed 'preconceived things'. An analysis of the Sikh sources reveals that neither Sri Guru Arjun Dev had participated in the rebellion in any manner, nor had he mobilized any support in favour of Khusrau to oppose the emperor. Moreover, never in the entire history of the Sikh Gurus has there been any occasion for any Guru to anoint anyone with a *tilak*.[118] According to the early Sikh tradition, while Khusrau was on his way to Lahore, he met Sri Guru Arjun Dev at Tarn Taran.

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The Guru took pity on him and served him food.[119] Significantly, it does not make reference to *tilak* or blessings or any financial assistance. Thus the allegation of political complicity and of blessing the rebellious Prince Khusrau is historically unsound.[120] It is quite possible that Khusrau visited the Guru on his own and had food in the *langar* which was nothing unusual. It seems that someone, probably an opponent of the Guru, exploited it in such a way that it provided an opportunity to the emperor who was looking for an excuse to take action against the Guru. In fact, to unearth the mystery surrounding the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev one is required to examine the testimony that has come to us from none else than emperor himself. He writes :

> There lived at Goindwal on the bank of river Biah (Beas) a Hindu named Arjun in the garb of a *pir* and *sheikh*, so much so that he had by his ways and means captivated the hearts of many simple-minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish and stupid Muslims, and he had noised himself about as a religious and worldly leader. They called him Guru, and from all directions, fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For a long time the thought had been presenting itself to me that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam.[121]

It is evident that Jehangir was religiously prejudiced against the Sikh faith to dub it as a shop of falsehood (*dukan-i-batil*). Besides, he was highly perturbed over the fact that some of the Muslims had joined the ranks of Sikhism. He desired that either the Sikh mission should be stopped forthwith, or Sri Guru Arjun Dev should be forced to join the ranks of Islam. It proves that much before the so-called meeting of Sri Guru Arjun Dev with Khusrau, Jehangir had decided to take action against the Guru. It has been aptly remarked that "the political allegations were only used as a handy pretext and recorded as a camouflaging justification for his drastic action against a popular religious leader either to satisfy his own guilty conscience or to throw his future non-Muslim critics off the track of truth."[122] As mentioned earlier, for enlisting the support of orthodox Muslims, Jehangir had promised to defend the Islamic faith against the non-Muslim heathenism. Thus, during the very first year of his reign the emperor had to issue his commands in relation to Sri Guru Arjun Dev so that his bonafides as a protector of Islam could be established, to appease the Muslim revivalists whom he could ill afford to annoy at that time.[123] All these factors lead to the conclusion that communal bias as well as political expediency were the chief reasons that led to the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Since Jehangir made no enquiry into the truth of the charges levelled against the Guru, and hastily passed the death sentence, the entire judicial process was thrown to the winds.

According to the Sikh tradition, on being summoned by the emperor, Sri Guru Arjun Dev accompanied by five Sikhs, left for Lahore where he was put to trial and subsequently kept in captivity in the house of Chandu Shah.[124] On the testimony of *Tuzak*, we can say that during the trial at the royal court Sri Guru Arjun Dev was given the option to choose between Islam and death. Though the emperor had issued

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orders of death by torture, yet the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* states that the Guru was heavily fined which he was unable to pay.[125] Similarly, the Jesuit records hold that certain noble persons interceded on behalf of their holy man, and in the end he was allowed to purchase his freedom for a hundred thousand crusados for which a wealthy gentile became his surety.[126] Sarup Das Bhalla also makes us believe that on the suggestion of Chandu, Jehangir imposed a fine of two *lakh* rupees on the Guru. He further remarks that Jehangir allowed Chandu to keep the Guru in his custody until he realised the fine from him.[127] On the basis of the above accounts a historian believes that the capital punishment was commuted into heavy fine.[128] Another historian, however, feels that it is all based on hearsay or what was circulated by the official sources or interested parties to absolve the reigning emperor of wanton tyranny in the eyes of the public.[129] Jehangir in his *Tuzak* makes no reference to the fine, thus it is extremely difficult to give credence to the story of the fine and its nonpayment being the main cause of the Guru's persecution.

Jehangir was quite explicit in his order that Sri Guru Arjun Dev should be put to death in accordance with *yasa-o-siyasat*, i.e., a torturous death in the Mughal manner. The author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* confirms that "having imprisoned him (Sri Guru Arjun Dev), they kept him in the sandy desert of Lahore. From the heat of sun, the severity of the summer and the tortures of the bailiffs he gave his life."[130] Though, in all probability it was Sheikh Farid Bukhari Murtaza Khan, who executed the imperial order to put Sri Guru Arjun Dev to a torturous death, yet the Sikh tradition describes that it was none else but Chandu Shah who had got custody of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, and who was responsible for subjecting him to all sorts of tortures.[131] We are informed that initially the Guru was not given anything to drink and eat. Thereafter he was made to sit for hours together on a hot iron plate. Besides, in the scorching heat of summer, burning sand was poured on his naked body. Though the Guru was subjected to inhuman torture, he bore all this with equanimity and fortitude, abiding in the sweet Will of the Lord. We are informed that Mian Mir, who visited the Guru to express his sympathy, was struck with awe at the enormity of his physical sufferings. It is said Mian Mir sought the Guru's permission to intercede with the Mughals, but he refused and said, "I bear all this torture to set an example to the teachers of True Name that they may not lose patience or rail at God in affliction. The true test of faith is the hour of misery."[132]

Sikh tradition informs that while he was being tortured he continued to recite *Gurbani* to accept the Will of God in an ungrudging manner.[133] Bhai Gurdas admires the unprecedented composure maintained by the Guru to state that as the deer even after being caught remains intoxicated by the music of the hunter's bell, similarly was Sri Guru Arjun Dev, who in spite of the physical sufferings had nothing else in his mind except the Word (*Sabad*).[134] We are informed that due to the severity of the tortures Sri Guru Arjun Dev's body was full of blisters and the soles of his feet had turned sore. In order to cause maximum pain that could be inflicted on a blistered body, Sri Guru Arjun Dev was brought to the river Ravi to give him a dip in the cold

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water.[135] Resultantly, he succumbed to the final torture and subsequently his dead body was thrown into the river.[136] This occurred on May 30, 1606 CE, exactly seven days after the imperial order whereby Jehangir had sentenced Sri Guru Arjun Dev to a torturous death.

The martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev was of far-reaching consequences for both the Sikhs and the Mughals as well. The policy of reconciliation between the various faiths that Akbar had cherished was gone with the winds of change. The multi-religious character of Indian society and religious freedom of the non-Muslims came under severe constraints. The Sikhs were shocked and stunned by the enormous injustice that had been done to their Master. Since the Mughal state looked upon them as *kafirs* and was determined to exterminate their faith, a strong sense of indignation and insecurity gripped them. It compelled the Sikhs to adjust their attitude towards a State that was no more considerate towards its non-conforming subjects. Accordingly, it was realised that besides the virtue of humility, means for self-defence were also required. Thus, the militarization of the Sikhs was hastened by Sri Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom. A new phase in the relationship between 'the house of Babar' and 'the house of Nanak' was ushered in, and instead of goodwill and cordiality, misunderstanding and confrontation had come to prevail.

— *B.S.*

Notes and References

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6. Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*; Vol. I, pp. 353-54.
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8. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Sarang*, p. 1200.
   ਕਾਹੇ ਪੂਤ ਝਗਰਤ ਹਉ ਸੰਗਿ ਬਾਪ ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਜਣੇ ਬਡੀਰੇ ਤੁਮ ਹਉ ਤਿਨ ਸਿਉ ਝਗਰਤ ਪਾਪ ॥
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16. Ibid., p. 104.
17. Ibid.
18. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 40; Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., pp. 308-309.
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20. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp. 360-61.
21. Ibid, p. 364.
22. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 316, 320; Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 45.
23. For the description of the complex, see Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., pp. 320-321.
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25. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. III, p. 9.
26. Ibid, pp. 9-10.
27. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Suhi*, pp. 783-84 :
ਸੰਤਾ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਜਿ ਆਪਿ ਖਲੋਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਕੰਮੁ ਕਰਾਵਣਿ ਆਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਧਰਤਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਤਾਲੁ ਸੁਹਾਵਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਜਲੁ ਛਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਜਲੁ ਛਾਇਆ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਾਜੁ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਸਗਲ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਪੂਰੇ ॥
ਜੈ ਜੈ ਕਾਰੁ ਭਇਆ ਜਗ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਲਾਥੇ ਸਗਲ ਵਿਸੂਰੇ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਪੁਰਖ ਅਚੁਤ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਜਸੁ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਗਾਇਆ ॥
ਅਪਨਾ ਬਿਰਦੁ ਰਖਿਆ ਪਰਮੇਸਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥੧॥
ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਰਿਧਿ ਦੀਨੇ ਕਰਤੇ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਕਾਈ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਖਾਤ ਖਰਚਤ ਬਿਲਛਤ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੀ ਦਾਤਿ ਸਵਾਈ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਦਾਤਿ ਸਵਾਈ ਨਿਖੁਟਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਕੋਟਿ ਬਿਘਨ ਸਗਲੇ ਉਠਿ ਨਾਠੇ ਦੂਖੁ ਨ ਨੇੜੈ ਆਇਆ ॥
ਸਾਂਤਿ ਸਹਜ ਆਨੰਦ ਘਨੇਰੇ ਬਿਨਸੀ ਭੂਖ ਸਬਾਈ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਕੇ ਅਚਰਜੁ ਜਿਸੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਰਾਮ ॥੨॥
ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਕਾਰਜੁ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਕੀਆ ਮਾਣਸੁ ਕਿਆ ਵੇਚਾਰਾ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਭਗਤ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਸਦਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਜੈਕਾਰਾ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਅਨਦ ਉਪਜੇ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਸੰਗਿ ਬਨੀ ॥
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28. Ibid., *Raag Sorath*, p. 623 :
ਵਿਚਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਖਲੋਆ ॥ ਵਾਲੁ ਨ ਵਿੰਗਾ ਹੋਆ ॥
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ਜੈ ਜੈ ਕਾਰੁ ਜਗੁ ਗਾਵੈ ॥ ਮਨਿ ਚਿੰਦਿਅੜੇ ਫਲ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
ਸਹੀ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਨਾਇ ਆਏ ॥ ਅਪਣਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਧਿਆਏ ॥੨॥
ਸੰਤ ਸਰੋਵਰ ਨਾਵੈ ॥ ਸੋ ਜਨੁ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
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ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਪਨਾ ਸਗਲੇ ਪਾਪ ਤਜਾਵਹਿ ਰਾਮ ॥
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ਹਰਿਹਾਂ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਸਮਲ ਜਾਹਿ ਨਾਇਐ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਸਰ ॥੧੦॥
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40. Ibid., p. 13.
41. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 36:1-8. For the Mina tradition's deviation from the Sikh ideals, see Rajguru, Govind Nath (ed.) : *Goshti Guru Miharvanu*, pp. 169-328.
42. Sulhi Khan, Noor Din and Chandu Shah were the Mughal officials, who were opposed to Sri Guru Arjun Dev. For the hostile attitude of these officials, see Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 825; Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., pp. 414; Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., pp. 45-46; Bal, Vir Singh : *Gur Kirat Parkash*, pp. 151-159. Also see, *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, p. 111.
43. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 347; Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp. 375-378; also see Sohan Kavi : *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, pp. 618-622.
44. Habib, Irfan : *An Atlas of Mughal Empire*.
45. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 376; Bhai Kahn Singh in his *Mahan Kosh*, states that there was a natural pond, which Sri Guru Arjun Dev converted into a tank and soon word spread that its water had miraculous effect to cure the sick. p. 1190.
46. *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, p. 109.
47. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., 348; Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 376.
48. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 378.
49. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 27.
50. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. III, p. 26.
51. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 388.
52. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 348; Kahn Singh, Bhai : op. cit., p. 1190.
53. Bhandari, Sujan Rai : *Khulasat-ut- Twarikh*, p. 436.
54. Abul Fazl : *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, p. 1115.
55. Bhandari, Sujan Rai : op. cit., p. 436; Abul Fazl : op. cit., Vol. III, p. 1115.
56. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp. 384-385.
57. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Sri Raag*, pp. 73-74.
    ਮੈ ਬਧੀ ਸਚੁ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ਹੈ ॥
    ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਲਹਦਾ ਭਾਲਿ ਕੈ ॥... ...
    ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ ਦਾ ॥
    ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ ॥
    ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥
58. Ibid., *Raag Asa*, p. 430.
    ਜੇਜੀਆ ਡੰਨੁ ਕੋ ਲਏ ਨ ਜਗਾਤਿ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੀਨੀ ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਛਾਪ ॥੫॥
59. Ibid., *Raag Bilaval*, p. 817.
    ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਪੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ॥
60. J S Sabar, *Two years Sikh Studies*, SGPC, Amritsar, 2008, p. 35
61. Ibid., p. 149.
62. Ibid., pp. 148-49.
63. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 50.
    ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਪੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀਏ ਦਾ ਕਬੀਸਰੀ ਕਰੇ ।
    ਪਾਰਸੀ ਹਿੰਦਵੀ ਸਹੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਪੜੇ ।
    ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਬਣਾਈ ।

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ਭੋਗ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਪਾਈ ।

64. Ibid., p. 50; Rajguru, Govind Nath (ed.) : *Goshti Guru Miharvanu*, p. 198.
65. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 50; *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, p. 132.
66. Kesar Singh Chhibar: op. cit., p. 50.
67. Ibid., p. 50
68. Banerjee, I.B. : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, pp. 204-05.
69. *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, p. 129.
70. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp. 405-09.
71. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., p. 81.
72. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Gauri*, p. 199 :
ਮਹਜਰੁ ਝੂਠਾ ਕੀਤੋਨੁ ਆਪਿ ॥ ਪਾਪੀ ਕਉ ਲਾਗਾ ਸੰਤਾਪੁ ॥੧॥
ਜਿਸਹਿ ਸਹਾਈ ਗੋਬਿਦੁ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਉ ਜਮੁ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਨੇਰਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਸਾਚੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੋਲੈ ਕੂੜੁ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਹਾਥ ਪਛੋੜੈ ਅੰਧਾ ਮੂੜੁ ॥੨॥
ਰੋਗ ਬਿਆਪੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਪਾਪ ॥ ਅਦਲੀ ਹੋਇ ਬੈਠਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਪਿ ॥੩॥
ਅਪਨ ਕਮਾਇਐ ਆਪੇ ਬਾਧੇ ॥ ਦਰਬੁ ਗਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਜੀਅ ਕੈ ਸਾਥੈ ॥੪॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਨਿ ਪਰੇ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥ ਰਾਖੀ ਪੈਜ ਮੇਰੈ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥੫॥੬੯॥੧੬੮॥
73. Ibid., *Raag Bilaval*, pp. 826-27 :
ਅੰਗੀਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਅਪਨੈ ਦੋਖੀ ਸਗਲੇ ਭਏ ਰਵਾਲ ॥
ਕੰਠਿ ਲਾਇ ਰਾਖੇ ਜਨ ਅਪਨੇ ਉਧਰਿ ਲੀਏ ਲਾਇ ਅਪਨੈ ਪਾਲ ॥੧॥
ਸਹੀ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਘਰਿ ਆਏ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਕੇ ਮੁਖ ਹੋਏ ਕਾਲ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਏ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥੨॥੨੭॥੧੧੩॥
74. Ibid., *Raag Sorath*, p. 621.
ਮਿਲਿ ਪੰਚਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਸਹਸਾ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਿਕਦਾਰਹੁ ਨਹ ਪਤੀਆਇਆ ॥
ਉਮਰਾਵਹੁ ਆਗੈ ਝੇਰਾ ॥ ਮਿਲਿ ਰਾਜਨ ਰਾਮ ਨਿਬੇਰਾ ॥੧॥
75. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp. 404-05.
76. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Asa*, p. 371.
ਪ੍ਰਥਮੇ ਮਤਾ ਜਿ ਪਤ੍ਰੀ ਚਲਾਵਉ ॥ ਦੁਤੀਏ ਮਤਾ ਦੁਇ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਪਹੁਚਾਵਉ ॥
ਤ੍ਰਿਤੀਏ ਮਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਉ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਮੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤੁਹੀ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥੧॥ ... ...
ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰੀ ਸੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਤਾਣੁ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੀ ਓਟ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ ॥੨॥
ਤੁਧਨੋ ਛੋਡਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੈਂ ਧਰਿ ॥ ਆਨ ਨ ਬੀਆ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਮਸਰਿ ॥
77. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 405.
78. Ibid., *Raag Bilaval*, p. 825.
ਸੁਲਹੀ ਤੇ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਰਾਖੁ ॥
ਸੁਲਹੀ ਕਾ ਹਾਥੁ ਕਹੀ ਨ ਪਹੁਚੈ ਸੁਲਹੀ ਹੋਇ ਮੂਆ ਨਾਪਾਕੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਕਾਢਿ ਕੁਠਾਰੁ ਖਸਮਿ ਸਿਰੁ ਕਾਟਿਆ ਖਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਗਇਆ ਹੈ ਖਾਕੁ ॥
ਮੰਦਾ ਚਿਤਵਤ ਚਿਤਵਤ ਪਚਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਰਚਿਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਦੀਨਾ ਧਾਕੁ ॥੧॥
ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਮੀਤ ਧਨੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਰਹਿਓ ਸੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਗਇਆ ਸਭ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਕੁ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਨ ਕਾ ਕੀਨੋ ਪੂਰਨ ਵਾਕੁ ॥੨॥੧੮॥੧੦੪॥
79. Ibid., *Raag Gauri*, p. 199.
ਗਰੀਬਾ ਉਪਰਿ ਜਿ ਖਿੰਜੈ ਦਾੜੀ ॥ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮਿ ਸਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਸਾੜੀ ॥੧॥
ਪੂਰਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਦਾਸ ਕਉ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿ ਪਰਤਾਪੁ ॥ ਨਿੰਦਕੁ ਮੁਆ ਉਪਜਿ ਵਡ ਤਾਪੁ ॥੨॥
ਤਿਨਿ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਜਿ ਰਖੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਆਗੈ ਪਾਛੈ ਮੰਦੀ ਸੋਇ ॥੩॥
ਅਪੁਨੇ ਦਾਸ ਰਾਖੈ ਕੰਠਿ ਲਾਇ ॥ ਸਰਣਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇ ॥੪॥੬੮॥੧੬੭॥
80. Ibid., *Raag Todi*, p. 714.
ਨਿੰਦਕੁ ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਹਾਟਿਓ ॥

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ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਏ ਦਇਆਲਾ ਸਿਵ ਕੈ ਬਾਣਿ ਸਿਰੁ ਕਾਟਿਓ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਕਾਲੁ ਜਾਲੁ ਜਮੁ ਜੋਹਿ ਨ ਸਾਕੈ ਸਚ ਕਾ ਪੰਥਾ ਥਾਟਿਓ ॥
ਖਾਤ ਖਰਚਤ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਿਖੁਟਤ ਨਾਹੀ ਰਾਮ ਰਤਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਖਾਟਿਓ ॥੧॥
ਭਸਮਾ ਭੂਤ ਹੋਆ ਖਿਨ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਅਪਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਆਗਮ ਨਿਗਮੁ ਕਹੈ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਭੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਲੋਕੁ ਸਬਾਇਆ ॥੨॥੬॥੧੧॥

81. Ibid., *Raag Maru*, p. 1099.
ਬਚਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਤੈ ਖਿਸਕਿ ਜਾਇ ਬੋਲੇ ਸਭੁ ਕਚਾ ॥ ਅੰਦਰਹੁ ਥੋਥਾ ਕੂੜਿਆਰੁ ਕੂੜੀ ਸਭ ਖਚਾ ॥
ਵੈਰੁ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਰਵੈਰ ਨਾਲਿ ਝੂਠੇ ਲਾਲਚਾ ॥ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਚੈ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹਿ ਵੇਖਿ ਧੁਰਿ ਕਰਮਚਾ ॥
ਜਮਦੂਤੀ ਹੈ ਹੇਰਿਆ ਦੁਖ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਪਚਾ ॥ ਹੋਆ ਤਪਾਵਸੁ ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਿ ਸਚਾ ॥੧੫॥
82. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., pp. 47-49.
83. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Bhairau* , p. 1137.
ਲੇਪੁ ਨ ਲਾਗੋ ਤਿਲ ਕਾ ਮੂਲਿ ॥ ਦੁਸਟੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਮੂਆ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਸੂਲ ॥੧॥
ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਰਾਖੇ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮਿ ਆਪਿ ॥ ਪਾਪੀ ਮੂਆ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਤਾਪਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
84. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., pp. 45-46.
85. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Gujri*, p. 498.
ਮਤਾ ਮਸੂਰਤਿ ਅਵਰ ਸਿਆਨਪ ਜਨ ਕਉ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਆਇਓ ॥
ਜਹ ਜਹ ਅਉਸਰੁ ਆਇ ਬਨਿਓ ਹੈ ਤਹਾ ਤਹਾ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਇਓ ॥੧॥
86. Bhai Gurdas provides very useful information about the professional and caste groups that had joined Sikhism during the period under discussion. For details, see *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 11:18-28; *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, pp. 73-145. The author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* states that "some of the Sikhs of the Guru do agriculture work and some trade and a multitude takes up service." (See *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 34.)
87. Among the Sikhs of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, Bhai Manj and Pirana were Rajputs, whereas Bala, Kishna Bhattu, Bholu, Vissa, Gopi, Tulsia and Piraga were Brahmins, see *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 11:18-20.
88. Bhai Gurdas informs that Bhai Langah and Lalu of the *pargana* of Patti, Chuhar, Paira Malik and Suri were some of the *chaudhris* who had joined Sikhism.
89. We find that among the Sikhs of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, Bhai Tiloka, Bhanna and Rikh Rao were serving in the Mughal administration, whereas quite a few, namely, Kaliana, Ganga Sehgal, Sigaru and Jaita had enrolled themselves in the Mughal army, see *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 11:18, 25-28; *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, pp. 75, 125, 128, 136, 139.
90. We observe that Bhai Manj and Pirana had been the followers of *Sakhi Sarvar*, Bhai Harbans had been a Jogi (*tapa*) and a number of other Sikhs had previously been the followers of various cults of Hinduism.
91. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 11:28.
ਮੀਆਂ ਜਮਾਲੁ ਨਿਹਾਲੁ ਹੈ ਭਗਤੂ ਭਗਤ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਕਾਰਾ ।
92. Ibid., 11:24.
ਪੰਜਾਬੈ ਗੁਰ ਦੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ।
93. Ibid., 13:19.
ਨਗਰਿ ਨਗਰਿ ਮੈ ਸਹੰਸ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਸ ਦੇਸ ਲਖੇਸਰੁ ।
94. Ibid., 11:26-27.
95. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 33.
96. Parsad, Beni : *History of Jehangir*, p. 37.
97. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
98. Ibid., p. 117.
99. Ganda Singh : *Guru Arjun Dev's Martyrdom*, p. 17.

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100. Rizvi, S.A.A. : op. cit., p. 291.
101. Parsad, Beni : op. cit., pp. 128-29.
102. Akbar, Muhammad : op. cit., p. 140.
103. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 410.
104. *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*, Vol. I, pp. 66-68.
105. Ibid., p. 72.
106. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., pp. 410-414; Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., pp. 45-46.
107. Ganda Singh : *Sri Guru Arjun Dev's Martyrdom*, p. 37.
108. *Maqtubat-i-Imam Rabbani Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani*, Vol. I, Part III, letter no. 193, pp. 95-96 as quoted by Ganda Singh in *Sri Guru Arjun Dev's Martyrdom*, pp. 36-37.
109. Ganda Singh : op. cit., p. 39.
110. Sarkar, Jadu Nath : *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 205.
111. Parsad, Beni : op. cit., pp. 137-38.
112. Akbar, Muhammad : op. cit., p. 192.
113. *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*, Vol. I, p. 72.
114. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 35.
115. *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*, p. 60.
116. Ganda Singh : op. cit., p. 22.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid., p. 23.
119. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 410.
120. Ganda Singh : op. cit., pp. 24-25.
121. *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*, p. 72.
122. Ganda Singh : op. cit., p. 26.
123. Ibid., p. 38.
124. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 414; Sohan : *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, pp. 129-35.
125. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 35.
126. Ganda Singh (ed.) : *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, pp. 48-49.
127. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 414.
128. Grewal, J.S. : *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, p. 64.
129. Ganda Singh : *Sri Guru Arjun Dev's Martyrdom*, pp. 28-29.
130. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 35.
131. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., pp. 414-16; Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 55; Sohan Kavi : op. cit., p. 135.
132. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., pp. 94-97.
133. Ibid., pp. 95-99.
134. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 24:23
ਰਹਿਦੇ ਗੁਰੁ ਦਰੀਆਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਲੀਨ ਹੇਤੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਣੀ । ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਤੰਗ ਜਿਉ ਜੋਤੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ ।
ਸਬਦ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਲਿਵ ਮਿਰਗ ਜਿਉ ਭੀੜ ਪਈ ਚਿਤਿ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਆਣੀ । ਚਰਣ ਕਵਲ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਵਰ ਜਿਉ ਸੁਖ ਸੰਪਟ ਵਿਚਿ ਰੈਣਿ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ।
ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਬਾਬੀਹੇ ਜਿਉ ਆਖ ਵਖਾਣੀ । ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੁਖ ਫਲੁ ਪਿਰਮ ਰਸੁ ਸਹਜ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਜਾਣੀ ।
ਗੁਰ ਅਰਜਨ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਕੁਰਬਾਣੀ ।
135. Ganda Singh : op. cit., p. 31.
136. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : op. cit., p. 55;
Bhangu, Ratan Singh : *Sri Gur Panth Parkash*, ed. Jit Singh Sital, p. 535.

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NANAK VI — SRI GURU HARGOBIND

Sri Guru Hargobind, the sixth Nanak, the architect of Akal Takht that faces Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar, founder of Kiratpur in the foothills of the Shivalik Hills, and wielder of *miri-piri* swords that congealed, in the illustrious personality of the Guru, spiritual and temporal authority, had in him the elements so mixed that even Nature must have marvelled and said : Here is the Man. He has been described by his contemporary writer and close associate Bhai Gurdas as, "breaker of military array, a man of invincible courage, doughty warrior and munificence incarnate."[1]

Sri Guru Hargobind, the son and spiritual successor of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, was born on 21 *Harh*, *Sammat* 1652 BK, (June 19, 1595 CE) at Wadali in the district of Amritsar.[2] According to Sarup Singh's *Guru Kian Sakhian*, which has been based on *Bhatt Vahi* accounts, Sri Guru Hargobind's date of birth is 21 *Harh*, 1647 BK (June 18, 1590 CE).[3] However, the former date, recorded by Kavi Sohan of *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, is mostly accepted. It is said that Mata Ganga, the mother of Sri Guru Hargobind, remained issueless for quite some time after marriage. Pirthi Chand, the elder brother of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, and his wife Karmo were inwardly happy, for they felt that Sri Guru Arjun Dev would die without a successor and, therefore, their son Meharban would be the sole claimant to guruship. The Sikh traditions also confirm that the birth of a son to Sri Guru Arjun Dev, was not welcomed by Pirthi Chand and his wife.[4] Since Pirthi Chand was denied the right to guruship, he nursed a grievance against the Guru and his family. Sikh chronicles aver how the wife of Pirthi Chand, "sent for an old nurse of the family, and after some preliminary conversation asked her to go to Wadali, pose as a friend of the Guru's family, and find an opportunity to poison the newborn child.[5] However, the deceitful nurse failed in her mission. Desperate, Pirthi Chand went a step ahead and bribing a snake-charmer, sent him to the Guru's house to engineer the child's death by cobra bite,[6] but this also proved of no avail. All attempts of the jealousy-stricken and evil-natured Pirthi Chand to do away with the child came to nought, and the child bloomed into a young man and the beau-ideal of the Sikh masses who rallied around him for solace and

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strength.

After spending some time at Wadali, Sri Guru Arjun Dev and his family returned to Amritsar, and made adequate arrangements for the education of his son. According to Macauliffe, "the Guru sent for Bhai Budha who was highly experienced and had seen for himself the development of Sikhism since Sri Guru Nanak Dev." As a preliminary to Hargobind's education, prayers were read at Darbar Sahib (Harmandir Sahib) and thereafter the Guru publicly entrusted his son's education to Bhai Budha.

Baba Budha instructed him in the sacred lore, and taught him the use of weapons of offence and defence besides riding, hunting, wrestling and many other sports involving physical strength.

According to Dr Kirpal Singh, 'seeing the needs of the time, Sri Guru Arjun Dev asked Baba Budha to make a soldier saint out of his son'.[7]

According to some of the Sikh traditions, Sri Guru Hargobind had three wives, namely, Damodari, Nanaki and Marwahi and was blessed with a daughter and five sons.[8] The daughter, named Veero, and two sons, Gurditta and Attal Rai, were born to Mata Damodari. The second wife of the Guru, Mata Marwahi, gave birth to a son, Suraj Mal, and Mata Nanaki, to two sons, Anni Rai and Teg Bahadur.[9]

Sri Guru Hargobind ascended the *gurgaddi* on 9 *Harh*, *Sammat* 1663 (June 6, 1606 CE), at the age of eleven. His ascension was indeed a great event, for it brought a mighty transformation in the Sikh social organisation that lent a specific direction to the Sikh consciousness, and the concept of *miri-piri* practised by him eventually found its culmination in the saint-soldier Khalsa.[10]

Sri Guru Arjun Dev, before his death, left for his son and successor, Hargobind, the message : "Let him sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability."[11] It was the demand of times. Sri Guru Arjun Dev had realised that the Sikhs would have to defend themselves against the threat of armed attack. In fact Birbal had actually threatened to punish the Sikhs if Sri Guru Arjun refused to pay capitation tax on Sikhs. However, the confrontation was averted as Birbal was killed in the war on the frontier.[12]

At the time of formal investiture, Baba Budha brought for Sri Guru Hargobind "new-raiment, and placed before him a *seli* (a woollen cord worn as a necklace or twisted round the head by the Gurus), and a turban, as appurtenance of his calling."[13] But the Guru said, "My *seli* shall be a sword-belt, and I shall wear my turban with a royal aigrette."[14] Sri Guru Hargobind had been deeply touched by his father's sacrifice and had determined to give his parting message a practical shape and take the *Panth* to the next step towards fulfilment of Nanak's mission.

Sri Guru Hargobind, according to the Sikh sources, summoned the Sikh representatives to Amritsar and told them that from then on the Sikhs could send arms and good horses too as offerings.[15] The Sikhs were now being trained in the use of arms. The Sikhs enthusiastically responded to the Guru's call and a large number of youth especially from the *Majha* region (the region of Guru's abode) flocked to the Guru to train themselves in use of arms and to lay down their lives at his bidding.[16]

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Sri Guru Hargobind laid the foundation of Sri Akal Takht (literally, 'the seat of the Timeless Lord') close to Harmandir in consultation with Baba Budha and Bhai Gurdas in the year 1609 CE. The word *takht* means 'a throne', a sovereign chair of the State, a seat from where the state law is promulgated. Sohan Kavi writes that the foundation of Akal Takht was laid by the Guru himself, and the brick work was done by Baba Budha and Bhai Gurdas without the help of any mason. Akal Takht became the seat of the supreme temporal authority of the Sikhs. It symbolised the Sikh sovereignty.

From the Akal Takht, the Guru would enjoy the wrestling bouts and laud the display of youthful energy.[17] A large number of youth got themselves enlisted in the Guru's army. People began to wonder how he could continue to maintain such an army. In a short time, besides such as required regular pay, many gathered round him who were satisfied with two meals a day and a new dress every half-year.[18] The Guru divided his entire force under the charge of five chosen chiefs, namely, Bidhi Chand, Pirana, Jetha, Paira and Langaha.[19]

Sri Guru Hargobind's martial activities have sometimes been misunderstood. Some historians look askance at the Guru's attitude which to them seems at variance with that of his predecessors. They contend that while his forbears were advocates of peace, forbearance and fortitude, Sri Guru Hargobind maintained an army, and engendered martial spirit among his followers. This conclusion only exposes the lack of understanding of the Sikh worldview; in fact it was at the behest of the fifth Master that Sri Guru Hargobind embarked upon military activities. The concept of *miri-piri* was in fact the culmination of the admonition of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Babar, and has the same essence of fearlessness and challenge to tyranny and injustice born of hate and blind faith. The Guru strictly maintained the *maryada* of his preceptors. He rose at *amrit vela,* "bathed, dressed himself in full armour, and then went to the Harmandir — listened to the recitation of *Jap (ji)* and *Asa di Var* and then delivered his sermon to the congregation."[20] Similar congregation was held in the evening to say prayers and to preach the gospel of the faith.

New customs were evolving in the Sikh social order. The Guru now wore an aigrette in his turban; the Sikhs started addressing the Guru as "*Sacha Patshah*", the true king;[21] a new way of collective worship came into vogue with Sikhs holding torches in their hands and reciting hymns from the *Adi Granth*, and circumambulating the *parkarma* at Harmandir.[22]

Some writers are of the view that Sri Guru Hargobind gave to the Sikh movement a new turn which was not in line with the teachings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism. This is not correct. Sri Guru Nanak Dev has stated in his *Bani* that "our God kills the tyrant demons".[23] In *Babarvani* he talks of spilling of blood and felt grieved at the massacre of the innocent : "If the mighty kills the mighty then the mind is not saddened."[24] The Sikhs were mentally prepared by the Gurus not to tolerate tyranny — political or religious. It is also significant that from the time of the second Nanak wrestling had become part of the Sikh way of life, thus signifying

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stress on physical strength.

Under these circumstances Sri Guru Hargobind adopted the policy of *miri* and *piri*. It was not a sudden change as perceived by some writers but on the other hand it was the evolution of a particular attitude compelled by political tyranny and religious hostility. The Guru wore two swords — one to represent spiritual power and other temporal.[25] He organised a guard of 52 stout Sikhs who later formed the nucleus of his future army. The Guru gave them each a horse and a simple weapon of war. He kept them in training by going on hunting expeditions, holding wrestling contests and arranging other games of physical strength. In this way the Guru not only emphasized the meditation of *Naam*, but also cultivated soldiership in his Sikhs. He took them to the next step of saint-soldiers.[26]

Imprisonment and Release

According to Dr Kirpal Singh :

"To determine the date of arrest of Sri Guru Hargobind is perhaps more difficult as compared to finding the date of his release. In former case no date has been ventured so far. The *Bhatt Vahis* are silent. There has been no mention of the date of detention in Gurmukhi or Persian sources. We have to build the case on various clues and hints here and there. It will, therefore, be very important to study circumstances leading to the imprisonment of the Guru.

"Sri Guru Hargobind received summons from the Mughal authorities while at Amritsar. After consulting Baba Budha and Bhai Gurdas the Guru set out for Delhi. All Gurmukhi sources including *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*,[27] *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*,[28] and *Mehma Parkash*[29] agree that the Guru visited Delhi and stayed at Majnu da Tilla for some time. Most of these sources record that the Guru met Emperor Jehangir at Delhi and the Guru and the emperor both went to Agra after the meeting.[30]

"*Gurpartap Suraj Granth* has dilated Guru's stay at Delhi whereas an earlier source *Mehma Parkash* has devoted one chapter (*Sakhi*) relating to the Guru's stay at Agra. Most probably the Guru stayed at Agra where he killed a ferocious tiger in one of his hunting excursions.[31] Hunting of a tiger by the Guru in a hunting excursion of the emperor has been recorded by *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*[32] as well as by *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*.[33] Both sources give details about the Guru killing a tiger. Fortunately, this is confirmed by the location of a historic Gurdwara named *Sher Shikar* ('Hunting the Tiger') in the jungles of Dholepur. G.B. Singh who stayed at Dholepur and had visited the Gurdwara gives the following details of this shrine :

'The Gurdwara was built to commemorate the killing of a ferocious lion by Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib while hunting in the Bharatpur District of Rajasthan. In pre-independence days it was the capital of erstwhile princely state bearing the same name. It is situated at a distance of twenty-one miles from Agra on the Agra-Gwalior national highway.

'The Gurdwara is of a modest structure and is located on the eastern side of the *parkarma* of an ancient tank. Half a dozen Hindu temples devoted to various deities

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stand on the southern side of the *parkarma*. The entire complex is known as *Athsath Tirath*, situated at a distance of four miles outside Dholepur.

'The Gurdwara is situated in picturesque surroundings with a backdrop of Aravali hills. The inhospitable Chambal Ravines are nearby. A colourful portrait depicting Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib taking on the lion with the help of a large shield held in the left hand and cutting the beast into two by a sword in the right hand, decorates the walls. *Parkash Utsav* of the sixth Master is celebrated here with great éclat every year.'[34]

FACTORS DETERMINING THE DATE OF DETENTION

"The Guru's internment in the Gwalior fort is a confirmed fact. Following factors are significant for determining the date of Guru's imprisonment :

1. "Recently a stone inscription in Persian was found in the fort of Gwalior which was discovered while a tank was being dug near the Gurdwara in the fort. The inscription runs :

   One perfect man, Pir-i-Hind, *the sixth Nanak Hargobind was imprisoned by the orders of Emperor Nur-ud-Din* Sultan-i-Hind, *Jehangir. While in the fort of Gwalior the son of Guru Arjun used to take bath day and night in this Gangula Tank —*

   Sammat 1670 Bikram *Wazir Khan*

   "There are two important deductions from this inscription. Firstly, the tank where the Guru used to take bath had been built by Wazir Khan, the founder of Wazirabad, a flourishing town in the district of Gujranwala (Pakistan). He belonged to Chiniot, modern district of Jhang (Pakistan). He was a great builder, having built a beautiful mosque at Lahore, for which he is still remembered. He built baths, markets and other buildings at Lahore and a brick fort at Chiniot.[35] According to Bhai Kahn Singh he was a great devotee of Sri Guru Arjun Dev and Sri Guru Hargobind.[36]

   "Secondly, the inscription gives the date, viz., 1670 BK, corresponding to 1613 CE, which implies that Sri Guru Hargobind was in Gwalior fort in the year 1613 CE or earlier.

2. "There are two significant clues in the *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, a work of 18th century. These clues implicitly give the date of the Guru's arrest. Firstly, Wazir Khan who brought Guru's summons to Amritsar said to the emperor :

   'The emperor talked of Guru and said that six years have passed since martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Wazir Khan sighed and uttered that Sri Guru Arjun Dev was manifestation of God.'[37]

   "It clearly implies that the Guru was imprisoned six years after the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. That comes to 1612 CE as Sri Guru Arjun Dev was martyred in 1606 CE.

3. "The second important clue does not give the Bikrami Sammat but gives Lunar and Solar dates of Guru's departure from Amritsar after receiving the summons. The exact wording is :

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'After salutation (to his mother) the Guru set out after riding on the horse. That day was Sunday, fourth of Lunar month and two days of the month of Magh had passed.[38]

"With the help of these indications we have to find out the year. In *An Indian Ephemeris*,[39] we have tried to find the year fulfilling three conditions — Sunday, Magh 3, and Chauth (4th) of Lunar date. It appears that the day of Sunday is not correct. These three conditions are not fulfilled during the life of Sri Guru Hargobind. The third of the month of *Magh* and fourth day of *puranmassi* was December 31, 1612 CE.[40] Perhaps this is the date when the Guru set out from Amritsar towards Delhi. This leads to the conclusion that the Guru was arrested early 1613 CE.

ADMINISTRATIVE EVIDENCE

"The order for the execution of Sri Guru Arjun Dev was given to Murtza Khan who was the governor of the Punjab. It has been stated in *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri* :

> I ordered them to produce him and handed over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtza Khan and having confiscated his property commanded that he be put to death by *yasa*.[41]

"Murtza Khan's real name was Bakhshi Farid Khan and he was an ardent follower of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi of Naqashbandi order. It is evident from the letters of Sheikh Ahmed addressed to Bakhshi Farid and published in *Maqtubat-i-Imam Rabbani*, preserved in Punjabi University, Patiala (Dr Ganda Singh Collection). Jehangir gave him the title of Murtza Khan[42] which means praiseworthy. He was granted *jagir* of Bhairowal on the right bank of Beas near Fatehabad where a battle had been fought against the army of Jehangir when he was pursuing the forces of rebel prince Khusrau.[43] He was ordered to 'hang up and impale the seditious *ahmaqs* and others who had taken part in the rebellion.'[44] It appears that Murtza Khan remained the governor of Punjab uptil January 1608 CE after which Qutlij Khan was appointed governor.[45] Murtza Khan was reappointed as governor of Punjab in the month of Tir 1020 Hijri corresponding to July 1611 CE.[46]

"On account of the governor's hostile attitude towards Sri Guru Hargobind there appeared to be the adverse reporting. It was perhaps at his instance that the Guru was summoned to meet the emperor. Thus Murtza Khan's reappointment as governor in the *Suba* of Lahore as mentioned in *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri* coincides with the date of inscription recently found at the Gurdwara in the fort of Gwalior as well as with the indication and hints and clues mentioned in the chronogram relating to the internment of the Guru. Thus it appears almost certain that the Guru was imprisoned in the first half of the year of 1613 CE.

RELEASE OF THE GURU

"The Sikh sources like *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* and *Mehma Parkash* account for the release of the Guru from the Gwalior fort due to the illness of Jehangir. He was

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advised to release the Guru to be cured of his illness and he did accordingly. No specific date has been mentioned for indisposition of the emperor.[47] *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, however, suggests that the Guru was released because of the intervention of Sufi saint, Mian Sheikh Mohammad Mir, popularly known as Mian Mir of Lahore.[48] It may be mentioned here that the Sufi saint had known the house of the Guru as there has been very strong tradition among the Sikhs that the foundation stone of Harmandir Sahib was laid by Mian Mir at the request of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, father of Sri Guru Hargobind. So it is very likely that Mian Mir would have spoken to the emperor when he met him. During his rule Jehangir met Mian Mir only once. That was on Thursday, December 30, 1619 CE (3rd *Bahman* Hijri 1029). This meeting took place at Kalanaur.[49] According to *Bhatt Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind*, the Guru and Jehangir were at Kalanaur (modern district Gurdaspur) on 1 *Phagan*, 1675 BK, that is, February 27, 1620 CE.[50] Both the sources suggest that the Guru would have been released around 1676 BK, that is, 1619-20 CE. *Bhatt Vahi Multani Sindhi* states that the Guru reached Amritsar on the first of *Magh* 1676 BK corresponding to January 28, 1620 CE. It may also be true as Kalanaur and Amritsar are not very far. *Guru Kian Sakhian* gives 28 *Katak*, 1676 BK, that is, November 28, 1619 CE, the date of Guru's release from Gwalior along with Hindu *rajas*. From the above analysis, it is evident that Guru was released in 1678 BK (1619-1620 CE).

"Sri Guru Hargobind was confined in the Gwalior fort as already mentioned, in the first half of 1613 CE and was released in 1619-20 CE. Thus the duration of his imprisonment was about six years.

"It will not be out of place to discuss here another aspect of the Guru's imprisonment in the Gwalior fort. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh argue in a footnote on page 46 of *A Short History of the Sikhs* (1950) "...during these very years several children were born to him : Gurditta in 1613, Viro 1615, Suraj Mal in 1617, Ani Rai in 1618, Attal in 1619, and Tegh Bahadur in 1621." Karam Singh, who was the first writer to study and research the chronology of Sikh Gurus has asserted that there had been errors in writing chronology of Sri Guru Hargobind because the death date of Baba Gurditta in 1638 CE had been mistakenly accepted as the date of death of Sri Guru Hargobind and recorded on the fly leaves of manuscript copies of the *Adi Granth* (*Birs*). Hence there has been difference of five or six years. Randhir Singh has worked on *Gurparnalian* and his work with the same title was published by S.G.P.C., Amritsar in 1964. He writes in the preface that after correcting different conflicting versions he had prepared *Shudh Gurparnali* which he has given at the end of the book and has extensively quoted his sources. According to *Shudh Gurparnali* mentioned by him, Sri Guru Hargobind's "first marriage with Mata Damodari took place on 23 *Bhadro*, 1660 BK[51], viz., August 1603 CE. The second marriage of the Guru with Mata Nanaki was performed on 1 *Vaisakh*, 1677 BK, viz., March 28, 1620 CE. The third marriage with Mata Marwahi was performed on 11 *Savan*, 1677 BK corresponding to July 10, 1620 CE."[52] The *Shudh Gurparnali* by Bhai Randhir Singh and *Bhatt Vahis* record the following dates of sixth Guru's children :

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1. The date of birth of Baba Gurditta has been recorded in the *Bhatt Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind — Asu Puranmassi* 1655 BK, viz., October 4, 1608 CE[53] at Guru ki Daruli (modern distt. Ferozepur).
2. Guru Tegh Bahadur was born on October 18, 1621 CE (19 *Maghar*, 1678 BK) from Mata Nanaki.[54]
3. Suraj Mal was born 5 *Asu* (September 5, 1623 CE) from Mata Marwahi.
4. Anni Rai was born 23 *Katak* (October 24, 1623 CE) from Mata Damodari.
5. Attal Rai was born on 11 *Phagan* (February 6, 1626 CE).
6. Bibi Viro was born on 11 *Savan*, (July 11, 1626 CE).[55]

"Thus the Guru's children were either born before his confinement in the Gwalior Fort or after."[56]

After the release from Gwalior fort the Guru's relations with Emperor Jehangir remained cordial. According to Sikh chronicles, the emperor desired that the Guru accompany him some time, as the former was not feeling well.[57] The emperor expressed his feeling to the Guru for a change of air. "I, therefore, intend to spend this summer in Kashmir. If thou desire to defer thy homeward journey until Thursday, the lucky thirteenth day of the half lunar month, we will travel to Kashmir together, and I shall enjoy thy pleasant companionship."[58] Mohsin Fani writes that Sri Guru Hargobind was always close to Jehangir.[59] The Sikh chronicles even mention that the Guru visited Amritsar on his way to Kashmir.[60] The author of *Panth Parkash* and *Itihas Guru Khalsa* have mentioned that the Guru was appointed in charge over the Punjab officials and was put in command of seven hundred horses, one hundred foot and seven guns.[61] The Guru is also said to have subdued a hill *raja*, Tara Chand of Nalagarh, on the request of the emperor.[62] But there is no evidence to prove the authenticity of these accounts. Had the Guru been given any official status, it must have been recorded in *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*. The emperor in his autobiography has given "full account of the riots and rebellions, war and conquests. The imperial regulations are reproduced in full. All the important appointments, promotions and dismissals are mentioned."[63]

Thus, it seems, after the release from Gwalior fort, the Guru had friendly relations with the emperor. Seeing no immediate danger from the imperial authority, the Guru took to missionary travels and visited many places. He left for Kartarpur (district Jalandhar).[64] He visited various villages and stayed at Kartarpur for about seven months. He next visited Mukerian, Hargobindpura and the adjoining villages. A large number of devotees gathered around the Guru. He then returned to Amritsar.[65] At Amritsar, the Guru received an intimation that a Sikh named, Almast, who had been preaching the Sikh religion at Gorakhmata, the place earlier visited by Sri Guru Nanak Dev and known as Nanakmatta, was being harassed by the Jogis who ousted him from the shrine, and attempted to uproot the *pipal* tree under which Sri Guru Nanak Dev had had a dialogue with *Gorakhpanthis*.[66] The Guru with his men reached Nanakmatta and sorted out the matter with the Jogis, and Almast was restored as the custodian of the shrine to carry on his missionary work at Nanakmatta.[67] According to Sikh chronicles, the Guru also visited Srinagar and then proceeded towards Sialkot, Malotia, Wazirabad,

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Mirpur, Bhimber and Behram. Later on, he visited Baramula, Uri, Muzaffarabad and then Gujarat. From Gujarat, he returned to Amritsar. The religious tours of the Guru, "enhanced his prestige and attracted a large following. A large number of spirited youth, sons of the soil, rallied around the Master.[68] During his tenure, the Sikhs experienced the spirit of freedom, and the martial spirit filled them with a rare enthusiasm.[69] The evolution of the Sikh community, now capable of taking up reins, gained momentum.

The Circumstances Leading to Armed Conflict

Though the Guru undertook extensive missionary tours, he did not neglect his aim to strengthen his force. He continued the policy which he had adopted towards the beginning of his pontification.[70] About his army, the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* writes, "The Guru had eight hundred horses in his stable and three hundred troopers on horse-back, and sixty men with fire-arms were always in his service."[71] Cunningham suggests that this force "possibly served as the Guru's bodyguard and secured the safety of his person."[72] As regards the character of the recruits, Mohsin Fani writes, "Whoever was a fugitive from his home took refuge with him."[73] Some scholars have also opined that deserters from the Mughal army, way-side robbers, and criminals were recruited[74] in the Guru's army, but after the recruitment they were transformed into devoted Sikhs, and became saint-soldiers.[75] The impact of the Sikh faith and the inspiring presence of the Guru, metamorphosed their lives.

Emperor Shahjahan was more fanatical in his religious zeal than his father and grandfather. The first ten years of Shahjahan's reign were marked by events that reflected Muslim orthodoxy and fanaticism. He issued *furmans* barring the Hindus to dress in Muslim style or to take wine. He even ordered the Mughal officials in Punjab to convert the Hindus to Islam, both by persuasion and coercion. It is said that in Punjab alone four hundred Hindus were converted to Islam. The converts were suitably rewarded by their Muslim peers. Thus, Shahjahan's policy of coverting Hindus into Muslims was a great challenge not only to the people of Punjab, but also to the entire country.

Bibi Kaulan's episode aggravated the situation. Kaulan was a devotee of the Guru and was being harassed by the *qazi* for reciting *bani*. She was also threatened with forcible abduction fearing which, Kaulan fled to *Guru-ghar* seeking shelter there. The Guru provided a separate house for her, near Baba Attal, which today is known as *Bibi Kaulan da Gurdwara*. There, she would remain absorbed in reciting the Name of the Almighty Lord the whole day. Near the house a tank was built, which became famous as Kaulsar or 'the pool of Kaulan' after her name. The *qazi* and other Mughal officials could not tolerate the fact that a person sheltered by the Guru could not be touched by them. They complained to the emperor against the Guru's growing influence.[76] The incensed emperor started looking for some excuse to try and show to the people that *Guru-ghar* was also subject to his orders.[77]

The Naqshbandis too played a nefarious role in spoiling the relations between the Mughals and the Sikhs. The relations became so stringent that it culminated in open

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warfare between the two. It is difficult to say exactly how many battles took place between the Guru and the Mughals. However, Macauliffe refers to three major battles between the Guru and the Mughal forces[78] : Battle of Amritsar (1628 CE), Battle of Lahira (1631 CE), and the Battle of Kartarpur (1634 CE). He writes that Shahjahan himself sent an army from Lahore against the Guru to reinforce his columns, and this fact has also been acknowledged by historians like Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, and I.B. Banerjee.[79]

Battles against Mughals

On October 28, 1627 CE, Jehangir died and Shahjahan ascended the throne of Delhi. The ties of cordial Sikh-Mughal relations that had existed since the release of the Guru from Gwalior fort were snapped and a period of open hostility started. There were quite a number of factors responsible for it. The foremost of these was the religious policy of Shahjahan. During his reign, religious fanaticism was at its considerable height. *Badshah Nama*, a contemporary work, tells us that Shahjahan ordered the destruction of all temples which were under construction and had not yet been completed. The famous Baoli of Sri Guru Arjun Dev at Lahore was also filled up in 1628 CE and in its place a mosque was constructed.

There was another cause which considerably embittered the feelings between the Guru and the Mughal authorities.

A *masand* named Sujan was bringing a beautiful horse for the Guru from Kabul. The horse was forcibly captured by an imperial officer who presented it to the emperor who gifted the same to Qazi Rustam Khan of Lahore. The Guru recovered the horse forcibly from the *qazi*. Some anti-Sikh chroniclers, with an eye on maligning the Sikh character, aver that the Guru had Bibi Kaulan, the daughter of the *qazi*, abducted. This story is nothing but a lie as no contemporary writer refers to it. Mohsin Fani, who makes as close an observation as to see whether the Guru, while discharging his arrows, brings some feeling of anger in his face or not does not even allude to this affair. Moreover the Sikh principles, which were personified in the Guru, preclude any possibility of this story having even an iota of truth.

J.D. Cunningham and after him G.C. Narang say that she was simply a concubine of the *qazi*. The author of *Umdat-ut-Twarikh* avers that she was the purchased maid-slave of the *qazi* who developed devotion for the Guru. Karam Singh Historian also feels that the maid-slave story is more probable.

The fact seems to be that Kaulan was a Hindu lady as is also signified by the name and was forcibly abducted by the *qazi* who kept her as his maidservant or concubine. It so happened that Kaulan came under the influence of Mian Mir and developed religious views which were far divergent from those held by the orthodox Muslims. Since in those days the expression of such unorthodox views by the slaves of a Muslim was not permitted, the *qazi* began to treat her harshly. She implored Mian Mir to help her in her difficulty. Mian Mir asked his disciple Abdullah to take her to Sri Guru Hargobind. Accordingly, Kaulan reached Amritsar and the Guru provided her all possible assistance

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to live a dignified life.

Rustam Khan felt highly incensed. He represented to Shahjahan that the Guru had abducted Kaulan to convert her to Sikhism. The emperor who already did not like conversions of Muslims to any other faith felt angered and began to look askance at the Guru.

Besides, the increasing power of the Guru, his taking into service of a large number of soldiers including Pathans and the Mughal deserters could not have failed in arousing suspicion in the minds of the provincial authorities regarding the actual purpose of the Guru. Trumpp writes, "As the Guru's expeditions were nearly always directed against the Mohammedans and the extortionate provincial authorities, we need not wonder that her popularity fast increased with the ill-treated rural population; even fugitive or oppressed man took refuge in his camp, where he was sure to be welcomed without being much troubled about religion, and the charms of a vagrant life and the hope of booty attracted numbers of warlike Jats, who willingly acknowledged him as their Guru the more as he allowed his followers to eat all kinds of flesh, that of cow excepted."[80]

As a result of these developments a stage seems to have been set, munition was in place and only a spark was needed for the conflagration to take place. The spark was provided by an event that took place in 1628 CE. Shahjahan, immediately after securing himself on the throne decided to visit Lahore of which he was particularly fond because it was the place of his birth and his protracted stays. According to the author of *Badshah Nama*, 'the royal camp reached the capital (Lahore) on the 7th of *Ramzan*, 1038 AH (1628 CE). At some distance from the town he was received with great pomp by Wazir Khan (who presented him with one thousand Ashrafis, by way of *nazrana*), the grandees and nobles of Lahore and *subedars* of provinces.

One day the emperor went hunting to a place known as Gumtala, which was situated where now parts of the district of Amritsar stand. The Guru was also incidentally occupied in similar pursuits at that place. Here one of the emperor's hawks came flying after a victim. It so happened that the emperor's hawk came down in the Sikh camp. The emperor's soldiers came to recover it but because of the arrogance and impudence shown by the imperial soldiers, the Sikhs refused to part with the bird and this started the trouble. There was a brief altercation and several of the imperial troops lost their lives, the rest hastening back to report at Lahore to the emperor where he was camping. The emperor was enraged at this insolence and show of authority by the Guru's followers and sent one of his generals, Mukhlis Khan (said to be the son of Zain Khan Koka) with 7000 cavalry. The Guru immediately after getting the information of the march of the Mughal army sent a messenger to the father of Bhai Sadhu, with whom the marriage of Guru's daughter, Bibi Viro, was fixed to take place the next day at Amritsar, that the marriage would now be solemnized at Jhabbal. The onslaught of the army was met at Lohgarh ('Steel Fortress'), built earlier, where twenty five of his brave soldiers fought to the last man. They used wooden cannons and prevented the Mughal army from entering the city till the evacuation of women and children and the

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non-combatants was complete. The leading commanders of the Guru's army like Bhai Bhanu, Bhai Sugha, Bhai Bidhi Chand, Bhai Tiloka, Bhai Ballu and Painda Khan took positions with about 200 men each.

Guru's family was safely taken to Ramsar, to be escorted out of the city from there.

Early in the morning, the Sikhs fought like desperate Spartans. Mukhlis Khan was killed in a hand-to-hand fight with Sri Guru Hargobind. The Guru lost some of his best commanders and fighters like Bhai Bhanu, Bhai Sugha, Bhai Gopal, Bhai Ballu and Bhai Mohan. Painda Khan, Bidhi Chand and Bhai Jaita fought with valour. With the death of commander, confusion prevailed among the imperial soldiers and they left the field. The dead were cremated with full honours. The marriage of Bibi Viro was celebrated at Jhabbal.

At Hargobindpur, the Guru fought another battle with the Mughal soldiers in 1630 CE. The *chaudhri* of the village, Bhagwan Das, fell foul of him and though he was killed in a clash with the Sikhs, his son Rattan Chand vowed to avenge his father's death and sought the help of Abdullah Khan, the *faujdar* of Jalandhar Doab. The *faujdar* marched upon the Sikhs with ten thousand soldiers.

A bitter fight ensued. After hard fighting, Jalandhar forces were defeated. Abdullah Khan and Rattan Chand were among those slain. On the Guru's side among the killed were Mathra Bhatt, son of Bhika.

Shortly after, the Guru had to measure swords with the imperial forces once again. Once two *masands*, Bakht Mal and Tara Chand, were bringing two horses for the Guru. *En route* their horses were forcibly seized by the imperial officers and sent to the royal stables at Lahore. The seizure of the horses was taken very seriously by the Sikhs who regarded this as a challenge to their sense of fair play. It is against this backdrop that Bidhi Chand, a dedicated Sikh, resolved to recover the horses at all costs. The task was no doubt difficult but still more difficult was to compromise with the wanton high-handedness of the Mughal officials.

Bidhi Chand went to Lahore and recovered both the horses one by one from the royal stables. Both the horses were brought to the stables of the Guru who was at that time camping at Lahira, a place near Bathinda.

The Lahore authorities were enraged. A large Mughal force under the joint command of Lala Beg and Kamar Beg was despatched to chastise the Sikhs. The battle took place at Lahira and it continued for eighteen hours. The Guru's positioning of his troops was in such a design that it was extremely difficult for the Mughal forces to have access to the only available source of water.[81] The Mughal commanders were slain in the combat and remnant of the army rushed back to Lahore. More than 1200 Sikhs were killed or wounded. Casualties on the side of the Mughals were much more. The Guru, to commemorate his victory, built a tank called Gurusar on the spot. The bravery shown by Jati Mal, Bidhi Chand and Rai Jodha during the battle was highly appreciated by the Guru. Mohammad Latif commenting upon the factors which led to the defeat of the Mughals says, "Lack of provisions and the difficulties of the march

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had a disastrous effect on the Mughal forces. They were reduced to dire straits and being defeated by the Sikhs fled to Lahore leaving its commanders slain on the battlefield."

A short while after, the Guru had to fight another battle against the Mughals. This time the cause was Painda Khan, the Afghan ex-general of the Sikh troops who had been dismissed on account of his haughty demeanour. He defected to the Mughals and lodged complaint with his cousin Qutab Khan, then *faujdar* of Jalandhar Doab, who at first refused to help the ungrateful wretch but thinking that the emperor might be pleased at such a venture asked Painda Khan to lodge his complaint personally with the emperor at Lahore who saw in it a fit opportunity to humble the Guru and sent a force of fifty thousand under Kale Khan, brother of the deceased Mukhlis Khan.

The battle was now joined at Kartarpur. It is said that on the eve of the battle, Dhirmal sent a secret letter to Painda Khan pledging support to him.

The Sikh forces were commanded by Baba Gurditta and Bhai Bidhi Chand. The Guru himself acted as the supreme commander. (Guru) Tegh Bahadur, then only fourteen, took part in the battle and showed feats of valour. As the battle was going on a man rushed with his sword upon the Guru and wielded it against his person. The Guru, however, parried the blow and with a stroke of his sword, severed the attacker's head saying, "Not so, but like this is the sword used." In a hand-to-hand fight Painda Khan fell upon his master, Sri Guru Hargobind, but receiving a mortal blow fell at the latter's feet. The Guru said, "You are a Musalman. Now is the time for you to repeat your *Kalma*." Painda Khan repentantly repeated, "O Guru ! Thy sword is my creed and my source of salvation." The Guru seeing his former favourite dying was moved to pity. It is said that he shaded him with his shield from the scorching rays of the sun and bade him final farewell.[82]

Painda Khan's death was followed by that of Kale Khan and Qutab Khan. The imperial army got dispirited and left the field. Mohsin Fani's account also corroborates this fact. He says, "On this occasion Mian Baderatt and Painda Khan met their death."[83] The battle ended in the total victory of the Guru on the 24th day of *Harh*, 1691 BK (1634 CE)

Last Phase

The Guru's teachings were gaining ground among people. In this connection, Mohsin Fani narrates an interesting story. A Sikh called Bhairo cut off the nose of the idol of Naina Devi, in a temple nearly ten kilometres away from Kiratpur. This was reported to the neighbouring *raja*, who lodged a complaint with the Guru regarding the outrage. Bhairo was summoned. He said he would admit the charge only if the goddess herself attested to it. One of the *raja*'s councillors said in reply, "Oh blockhead, how can the goddess speak ?" Bhairo smiled and said, "We now know who the blockhead is. If the goddess cannot repel her assailant and give evidence against him, how can you hope for any advantage from her ?"[84]

Bhairo's answer had a tremendous effect with the result that many hill people and

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hill *rajas* began to appraise critically their long-cherished beliefs. It was in this context that Mohsin Fani says, "From this time the disciples of the Guru increased considerably and in this mountainous country as far as the frontiers of Tibet and Khotan, the name of Musalman was not heard."[85] "The Guru had cordial relations with the hill *rajas*, and that he had gained a considerable reputation is proved by the fact that Perrah Kaivan Yazadani was moved by the name of the Guru and came to pay him a visit. Fazal Irani and Pir Hasan Ali from Saudi Arabia also came to pay their obeisance to the Guru.[86]

The Guru undertook occasional preaching tours in the neighbouring hill territories. During one such tour, he met a Maratha saint, Samrath Ram Das, at Srinagar (Garhwal) in 1634 CE. The saint was struck with astonishment at the sight of the Guru with two swords hanging on his sides, a white hawk perched on his wrist and an aigrette attached to his turban. He asked the Guru, "I hear that you are the successor of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Sri Guru Nanak Dev had renounced the world, while you wear swords, keep horses and an army, and people call you 'The True King'. What kind of a *sadhu* are you ?" Sri Guru Hargobind replied, "Saintliness within, worldliness without, arms for unprotected's protection and tyrant's destruction. Nanak gave up not the world; he gave up worldliness."[87]

Not much information is available about Sri Guru Hargobind's activities at Kiratpur. It, however, appears that the Guru laid more emphasis on the work of Sikh organisation and *parchar*. We know that in 1638 CE, Baba Gurditta, one of the Guru's sons, appointed four head preachers, viz., Almast, Phul, Goinda and Baba Hasna, and invested them with his own peculiar dresses. Almast was made the chief organiser for the preaching in eastern parts of the subcontinent and it goes to his credit that he raised gurdwaras in commemoration of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit at different places and organised *sangats* at numerous places in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Baba Hasna, who was a younger brother of Almast, established himself among the people of Pothohar, Kashmir and Hazara. Phul[88] and Goinda were assigned the area of Doab to carry on the *parchar* work. They were assigned their duties in 1636 CE, and both were successful missionaries. Phul also preached in Malwa region. All these four Sikhs established in their allotted territories the preaching centres which were named as *dhuén* or hearths, symbolising the flame of Sikhism.

The Guru sent Bhai Garia to Kashmir with twin purposes, viz., to preach Sikhism among people of Kashmir and to collect *daswandh* from the Sikh *sangat* there. Bhai Sundar was another zealous preacher who worked at Ayodhya and Agra. Bhai Nawal of Patna and Bhai Moharu of Deccan were other important Sikh missionaries, who preached Sikh religion in southern India.

The Guru sent Bidhi Chand[89] first to Bengal and then to Ayodhya. Bhai Gurdas was assigned preaching duty first in Kabul and then in Benares. Bidhi Chand, *en route* to Bengal, met Sundar Shah at Devnagar in Uttar Pradesh. Sundar Shah[90] was a disciple of Pir Buddan Shah and like his master had great respect for the House of Nanak. He, therefore, held Bidhi Chand in special esteem.

The Guru's concern for *parchar* produced remarkable results. He acquired a great

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influence amongst the hill people and the hill *rajas* alike. The Guru is said to have converted the *rajas* of Kangra and Pilibhit, while earlier the *rajas* of Haripur, Kulu, Suket and Chamba had developed respect for the Sikh religion.[91]

The last days of the Guru's life were marked by a series of tragic events. I.B. Banerjee avers that the last phase of the Guru's earthly sojourn was not as peaceful and tranquil as it otherwise might have been.[92] The Sikh tradition describes Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of Sri Guru Hargobind, as a saintly person who was entrusted with the task of spreading the message of the Sikh Gurus. He, however, did not give his consent to marry the daughter of a Sikh named Naghura,[93] and further displeased his father by his attempt to exhibit a miracle.[94] When rebuffed by the Guru that miracles have no place in Sikhism, he took a vow and as Macauliffe writes, "He circumambulated the Guru in token of offering himself as a sacrifice, and took his departure for Buddan Shah's shrine"[95] dying there in 1638 CE.[96] Baba Gurditta's son, Dhir Mal, took up a hostile attitude towards his grandfather and was dubbed by the Sikhs as another Pirthi Chand.[97] The Guru's first wife passed away in 1631 CE and the second sometime in 1638 CE.[98] One of the Guru's sons, Baba Attal Rai, died at a very tender age. Another son, Suraj Mal, showed little interest in spiritual affairs, while Tegh Bahadur, the youngest son, would spend most of his time in meditation.[99] When the Guru sensed that his earthly sojourn was nearing completion, he chose his grandson, Har Rai, the second son of Baba Gurditta, as the next torch-bearer of the House of Nanak.[100] The author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, who appears to have been present at the Guru's death, is wrong to state that Sri Guru Hargobind died in the year 1055 AH, because the 3rd of *Muharram* that year did not fall on a Sunday, the day given by him. However, it agrees with the year of 1054 AH (1644 CE) which also fits well in the chronology recorded in some old manuscripts of the *Adi Granth*.[101]

— *D.S.*

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NANAK VII — SRI GURU HAR RAI

The Birth

Sri Guru Har Rai was born at Kiratpur on January 30, 1630 CE.[1] He was married to Sulakhni, daughter of Daya Rai.[2] Though not much is known of his early life, it is certain that he grew up in an atmosphere surcharged with Sikh ethos. He received the best possible education in martial arts and Sikh worldview. He was a good horseman, a great hunter and adept in wielding weapons, such as the sword, the lance and the javelin. He was an expert in the art of warfare.

Sri Guru Har Rai was a rare blend of strength and tenderness. Although a skilled hunter, he would hesitate to kill. One day, while strolling in the garden, his loose cloak got stuck in a bush and damaged some flowers, which upset him greatly. He would often recite Baba Farid's *slok*, "All men's hearts are jewels; it is wicked to agonise them. If you have the desire to see your Beloved, hurt no one's heart." He was averse to all forms of needless violence, and would say, "You can repair or rebuild a temple or a mosque, but not a broken heart." Nothing pleased him more than doing good to others.

The Marriage

As Kavi Saundh, an eighteenth century saint and poet, writes, "Sri Guru Har Rai's father was Baba Gurditta and his mother was Raj Kaur. His wife's name was Sulakhni, and from her he had two sons, Harkrishan and Ram Rai."[3] Sarup Das Bhalla, the celebrated, author of *Mehma Parkash*, also vouchsafes, "Baba Gurditta was the father of Har Rai, Raj Kaur was his mother. Sulakhni was his wife to whom were born two sons, Har Krishan and Ram Rai."[4]

The Coronation

Sri Guru Hargobind was blessed with five sons — Baba Gurditta, Baba Suraj Mal, Baba Ani Rai, Baba Attal and (Guru) Tegh Bahadur. Attal, Ani Rai and Gurditta died during the lifetime of their father. Suraj Mal was too worldly, while Tegh Bahadur

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was apparently not prepared to bear the responsibilities of guruship. Baba Gurditta had two sons, Dhir Mal and Har Rai. The elder son, Dhir Mal, was deceitful and disloyal, and had been conspiring with the enemy against the Sikh establishment. Har Rai alone measured up to the expectations of the sixth Master. Sri Guru Hargobind, therefore, selected him as his successor.

In the last week of February, 1644 CE,[5] Guru Hargobind, as per the Sikh custom, seated Har Rai on the throne of guruship, circumambulated three times, placed five pice and a coconut before him and appointed him as his successor. He then bowed before Sri Guru Har Rai declaring that from that day onwards he would be the Guru.[6]

The Guru Maintains the Tradition

Sri Guru Har Rai maintained the traditions that Sri Guru Hargobind had laid for the spread of Sikhism. He was invariably accompanied by his armed retinue, but no conflict with the ruling powers took place, for Kiratpur was in the hills and out of the Mughals' way. Here the disciples and visitors came to seek his blessings and instructions. The Guru carried on the daily routine established by his predecessors. *Guru ka langar* remained the key factor in the social transformation that Sikhism had initiated. Early in the morning he would rise and after ablutions recite hymns from *Adi Granth*. Thereafter, he would listen to *kirtan* in *sangat*. He did not compose any hymns of his own. However, he discoursed daily on the *bani* of his predecessors. He also often discoursed on the following verses of Bhai Gurdas :

> A true Sikh rises before the night ends and turns his thought
> to God's Naam, to charity and to holy bathing.
> He speaks humbly and humbly he walks,
> Sweetness marks his talk and humility his movements.
> He wishes everyone well and takes pleasure in giving away gifts.
> He sleeps, but in moderation,
> And in moderation does he eat and talk, as enjoined by the Guru.
> He earns his livelihood through honest labour,
> And engages in good deeds.
> However eminent he might become,
> He does not indulge in showing off.
> He sings God's praises in the company of holy men.
> Such company he seeks night and day.
> Upon the Word is his mind fixed.
> And he delights in the Guru's Will.
> Unenticed he lives in this world of enticement.[7]

Sri Guru Har Rai's ministry of seventeen years played a significant role in guiding the Sikh community through the tense period following the hostilities between Sikhs and Mughals in the time of the sixth Nanak, which had resulted in the shifting of the Guru's abode from Amritsar to Kiratpur Sahib. The Sikhs having just passed through a turbulent period, it was only logical and appropriate for the Guru to avoid confrontation

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and undertake the task of consolidation quietly, avoiding any clatter of arms. Yet the Guru was not passive; his actions were part of a conscious policy. In fact, he required time and place to accomplish peaceful organisation and consolidation of the *Panth*.

The Guru did not deviate from the policy of his predecessor and followed it in letter and spirit. He kept a strong contingent of 2200 cavalry ready for any eventuality. He, however, took precaution to avoid, as far as possible, any clash with the Mughals.

In the meantime, eventful changes were taking place in Kahlur state in which Sri Guru Har Rai was living. Kalyan Chand, the *raja* of Kahlur, was killed in 1635 CE, when he tried to invade the territory of *raja* of Suket, whose daughter he had married. His son, Tara Chand, tried to avenge his father's death, but only with partial success.[8] Being rebellious in disposition, he refused to pay tribute to Emperor Shahjahan, who was so annoyed with his attitude that in 1645 CE, he sent Najabat Khan, son of Mirza Shahrukh, to attack his territory. Najabat Khan mobilised a large army, and took Raja Tara Chand a prisoner. Sri Guru Har Rai thought it advisable to move to Thapal near Sirhind.[9] Raja Tara Chand was released and his kingdom restored to him, when he acquiesced to pay the tribute. Shortly after, the Guru came back to Kiratpur. It is clear that the Guru avoided involvement in local conflicts as far as it was possible. However, if circumstances demanded, he was always prepared for action.

Consolidation of the Panth

The task of consolidation was not easy. First, the *masands*, whose primary function was to spread the Sikh faith, had gone corrupt, immoral, and recalcitrant. Secondly, the government of the day was not favourably disposed towards the Sikhs. The Naqshbandis, an ultra-orthodox element among Muslims, were very active, and were urging the Mughal government to follow the *Quranic* injunctions and take steps to convert the whole of India into *dar-ul-Islam*. They aspired to give their designs a practical shape, especially in the north-western parts of India. The continued absence of the Guru from Amritsar gave rise to various misgivings. The hostility of the disappointed claimants to guruship was also a hindrance in the smooth spread of Sikhism. The Minas claimed Harji to be the heir to Sri Guru Nanak Dev's throne. Harmandir Sahib was under their control and several *masands* had joined them. The saint-soldier tradition stressed by Sri Guru Hargobind was to be developed towards its logical end which required spiritual and military development side-by-side. Sri Guru Arjun Dev had consolidated the Sikh organisation by non-violent, non-aggressive and persuasive means. Under Sri Guru Hargobind another dimension of Sikhism became manifest — the protection of *dharam*, even by armed means. This raised many an eyebrow, for the critics failed to see the continuity between the teachings of Sri Guru Nanak and the resort to arms by Sri Guru Hargobind. Especially the political circles found, in the new dispensation of the Guru, a threat to their political, social and religious constructs. The situation, therefore, was delicate and challenging. The Guru faced it with rare courage. He avoided open conflict with the government or with any other socio-religious organisation, so that he might be able to pursue his spiritual mission

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undisturbed and unhampered. Apart from laying stress on the fundamentals of the faith like *langar*, altruistic deeds, *Naam-simran*, *sangat* and *kirtan*, he also undertook extensive tours in Malwa and Doaba regions of Punjab to preach the Sikh way of life. Thus, soon after taking over as Guru he concentrated on the task of spreading awareness about Sikh way of life, as also revamping his contacts with *sangats* of different places.[10]

After a brief sojourn at Kiratpur, the Guru again took to travels. He first visited Ropar where he was warmly received by Sikhs led by Bhai Binju, Bhai Binda, Bhai Gajjar and Bhai Gharian. From Ropar, he reached Waddi Lehal. The people of this place won the heart of the Guru through their devotion. The Guru was so pleased that he blessed them with the honorific "True servants of *Waheguru*". From Waddi Lehal the Guru reached Harianbelan.[11]

The Guru then reached Chautra Sahib wherefrom he proceeded to Kartarpur via Jalandhar. This city, founded by Sri Guru Arjun Dev in 1594 CE, played a crucial role in dissemination of the Sikh faith in the Doaba region. Baba Gurditta, Sri Guru Arjun Dev himself and his son and successor, Sri Guru Hargobind came to stay here at different points of time. The marriages of the latter's two sons, Suraj Mal and Tegh Bahadur, were solemnized here. Sri Guru Hargobind also fought a battle here in April 1635 CE, against the *faujdar* of Jalandhar. After the battle Sri Guru Hargobind went to Kiratpur, but his grandson, Dhir Mal, and his descendants continued to stay at Kartarpur. The Seventh Nanak visited Kartarpur several times. The well-known Gangsar pool, which had been sunk by Sri Guru Arjun Dev in 1599 CE, was bricklined.[12] Bhai Bhagtu, a dedicated Sikh of the Guru, died in 1708 BK (1651 CE)[13] here, and the Guru himself lit his pyre. In 1658 CE, the Guru encamped here along with his horsemen, and the place is today commemorated by a gurdwara named Tahli Sahib, after the tree under which the Guru reposed.

The next important halt of the Guru was at Nur Mahal. It is said that the Guru came here in response to the invitation of his devoted Sikh, Bhai Sukhia. Chaudhri Sood of this place waited upon the Guru. Tradition goes that Chaudhri Sood prayed to the Guru to bless his wife with a child and the Guru advised him to pray to God, who alone is the fount of grace. Here Bhai Fateh Shah, an important member of the *bakhshish*, too received the Guru's blessings.

After Nur Mahal, the Guru visited Puandra Sahib and was touched at the devotion of the people, blessing them with peace and plenty. From Puandra, the Guru reached Droli, now in Firozepur district. Sain Das, husband of the sister of Mata Damodri, lived at Droli which was frequently visited by Sri Guru Hargobind. The eldest son of Sri Guru Hargobind, Baba Gurditta, was born at Droli. He also completed the construction of the well which had been started by Sri Guru Hargobind.[14] Bhai Roop Chand, Bhai Kirpal, Bhai Bidhi Chand and other devoted Sikhs came to pay their homage and also to seek the counsel of the Master regarding the spread of the Sikh faith.[15] Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Tara, the grandsons of Bhai Behlo, and Bhai Behari, the son of Bhai Bhundari, served the Guru devotedly.

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From Droli, the Guru proceeded to Bhai Roopa, a village founded by the parents of Bhai Roopa, Sadhu and Surti, at the instance of the sixth Master. They were originally residents of Akolani also known as Tukolani, and had been followers of *Sakhi Sarvar*. Sri Guru Hargobind's teachings so transmuted them, that they became ardent devotees of the Guru, and even left their village which then was the stronghold of the followers of *Sakhi Sarvar*. They raised a new village which they named Roopa, after the name of their son believed to have been born with the blessings of Sri Guru Hargobind.

Roopa grew to be a devoted and enlightened Sikh who took keen interest in promotion of Sikhism in the Malwa region. His impact was profound and people not only listened to him, but also found solace and peace in his company. The followers of *Sakhi Sarvar* in hordes turned to the Sikh faith. Their *pir khanas* — worship houses of *Sakhi Sarvar* — closed down.[16] The Guru, in recognition of his services, installed Bhai Roopa as the overall in-charge of the missionary activities in the Malwa.

From village Bhai Roopa, the Guru visited different places and stayed at village Mari where he got a well dug to provide potable water to the people.[17]

Then the Guru reached Nathana where Sri Guru Hargobind had fought a battle with the Mughal forces, in 1534 CE. Here Kala and Karam Chand, sons of Mohan and leading figures of Sidhu-Brar clan, came to express their devotion to the Guru and to seek his blessings. They told their sorry tale of how they were maltreated by Kauras and Bhullars headed by Jait Pirana or Zaid Pirana who threatened even to evict them from the village Mehraj. They were sure that Kauras / Bhullars would listen to the Guru.

The Guru called Jait Pirana and told him not to harass the Sidhu-Brars because it did not behove one to fight on the basis of tribal considerations which were against the very spirit of brotherhood of man. Jait Pirana was convinced, but soon his pride overtook him, and he forgot his word given to the Guru. Being a doughty warrior, who could wield heavy spears, he had the audacity to boast that "except a few stalks of grass, Brars would have nothing."[18]

Finding the Kauras / Bhullars unreasonable and bloated with pride, the Sikhs of the area turned sympathetic to the cause of Sidhu-Brars, and rendered active help to them, with the result that Zaid Pirana was defeated and killed by Kala.

Kauras / Bhullars could not but feel sullen and disappointed.[19] At this juncture, with the Guru's intervention, reconciliation was brought about between the Brars and the Kauras / Bhullars with both sides agreeing to shed their narrow tribal affiliations and enjoy a sense of equality in the Sikh fraternity.

Under the impact of the teachings of the Guru, the caste / tribe based prejudices in marriages were also discarded, so that Kauras / Bhullars started entering into matrimonial alliances with Sidhus-Brars. With the weakening of tangential tendencies, the Malwa Sikhs were congealed into a unity based on equality in the Sikh faith.

From Nathana the Guru reached Mehraj in response to the invitation of its people, especially Kala, the *chaudhri* of the village. The village owed its existence to the blessings of Guru Hargobind who had inspired Mohan, the father of Kala, to found it.[20]

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One day, Kala presented his nephews, Sandhli and Phul, whose father had been killed in a battle during the time of Sri Guru Hargobind, to the Guru. Phul who was then five years old, at the instance of his uncle, patted his own naked belly like a drum in front of the Guru. When asked why he did so, Kala explained that the boy was hungry and wanted something to eat. The Guru blessed the boy, "You shall become great, famous and wealthy. The steeds of your descendants shall drink water as far as Jamuna; they shall have sovereignty for many generations and be honoured in proportion as they serve the Guru."[21] The utterance proved prophetic. The obscure Phul first came into prominence under the patronage of Sri Guru Har Rai, and this became the foundation of the future greatness of his family. Phul had six sons, from the eldest of whom, namely Tilok Singh, the *rajas* of Nabha and Jind descended, and Phul's second son, Ram Singh, sired the Maharaja of Patiala. These three were known as Phul-ké-Rajé, or *rajas* of the Phulkian States.

Next important sojourn was at Majhé-ki-Mari in the Malwa region. Here the Guru initiated Sangatia into Sikhism. Bhai Sangatia was a trader by profession and supplied *ghéo* to far off places. Once on finding that the Guru's *langar* had run short of *ghéo*, he offered the same and refused to receive payment in spite of repeated requests of the in-charge of the *langar*. The news reached the Guru who called him to his presence. He fell at the Guru's feet and expressed his desire to be initiated into Sikhism. The Guru fulfilled his desire, and he dedicated the rest of his life to the cause of Sikhism. After initiation he was given a new name, Bhai Pheru, implying thereby that he was a 'healing wanderer' always delivering comfort to the comfortless and the desolate.

Bhai Pheru was blessed with the honorific title of "Lord of *Guru ka langar*".[22] From then on, he took pains to establish *Guru ka langar* as necessary adjuncts of *sangats*. He was untiring in his efforts to enlighten the people on Sikhism. He established his Dera on Multan-Lahore road where *Guru ka langar* was served twenty four hours every day. He expired at an advanced age and was cremated near the village Chunia on the outskirts of Lahore.

From Majhé-ki-Mari, the Guru returned to Kiratpur. He built a fortress and a hospice at Dulowal (close to Makhowal). The fort had a spacious stable, a tank, a well and accommodation for a large number of warriors. These constructions were undertaken and speedily completed to cope with any eventuality that might arise due to an adverse turn in the politics of the day. Although the avowed policy of the Guru was that of non-involvement in the political affairs, yet he was ever prepared to intervene, in case the situation demanded.

The Guru undertook rapid tours, to forge new and update old contacts with as many *sangats* as possible. He left Kiratpur for Pehowa and Thanesar. Then he made a quick stop at Kiratpur. He also paid brief visits to Samrala, Sahnewal, Jaswal Bhai Ké, Dosanjh Masandan and Palahi. Here, Qasim Beg and Umar Hayat Khan, the grandsons of Mukhlis Beg, who had been killed in the battle of Amritsar (1634 CE), launched a sudden and unprovoked attack on the Guru's caravan which included the Guru's wife.[23] The Guru at that juncture was far ahead. At that crucial juncture, Gaura, the elder son

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of Bhai Bhagtu, who had earned the displeasure of the Guru because of his involvement in the murder of a devout Sikh who was also a personal attendant of the Guru, rushed upon the Mughal forces with his troops. He fought so fiercely that the Mughal forces had to retreat and seek shelter under the cover of darkness.[24]

When the Guru came to know of this, he at once sent for Gaura who, spattered in blood, presented himself before the Guru. The Guru was moved and pardoned him for the unwarranted murder of Bhai Jassa, one of the bodyguards of the Guru.[25] The Guru learnt from Gaura the events of the battle and bade him to return to his own territory.

After a short stay at Palahi, the Guru paid visits to Hadiabad, Kartarpur (district Jalandhar), Baba Bakala, Amritsar and Goindwal. At the latter place, Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shahjahan, waited upon him and sought his blessings. He also asked for active help in his struggle to reoccupy the throne of Delhi. The Guru blessed him and promised to visit his camp at Lahore.

According to *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind*, the Guru reached Srinagar via Galotian, Sialkot in 1660 CE, and stayed in Hap Bazaar, Srinagar. Bibi Saraswati, the mother of Bhai Pera and Pairaga, did her best to make the Guru's stay comfortable. Makhan Shah, the Lubana trader, Pelia Makhu Chand and other devout Sikhs also came to the Guru to offer their respects. Among them was Aru Ram, father of Kirpa Ram Dutt, who later led a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits to the court of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. The Guru blessed them and exhorted them to abide by the Sikh way of life.

From Srinagar, the Guru went to Mattan and Martand, and then he reached Mota Tanda where Makhan Shah lived. From there, he visited Akhnur and reached Jammu, where the local *masand* Bhai Kahna waited on him with *sangat*. The Guru made brief halts at Ramgarh, Khirri, Samba and Pathankot, before he returned to Kiratpur.[26]

The Guru concentrated his activities in the Malwa and Doaba regions for ideological considerations. The Guru was convinced that the Mughal government and Muslim elite were averse to the Sikh ideology, especially its social and political aspects which, in their reckoning, went totally against the world-view of the rulers. The Guru rightly understood that, with the passage of time, the contradictions would arise and clash was likely to take place. To meet such an eventuality, the Guru considered it essential to consolidate the ideological base of Sikhism in Malwa and Doaba regions — as Malwa was still uninfluenced by Islamic and non-Islamic missionaries and Doaba was only partially influenced. Further, Malwa region being far away from Sirhind and Lahore and being sandy and arid, held little attraction for the Mughals.

The Guru achieved a wonderful success. People, including village *chaudhris* and heads of various tribes such as Chaudhri Kala, embraced Sikhism in large numbers. New *sangats* were formed, and the old ones were re-vitalised and placed under the direction of *bakhshish* holders. The Guru took care that the *masands* were not unduly encouraged, and the Sikhs were encouraged to have direct links with the Guru. The crux of the teachings of the Guru was that the Sikhs should establish perfect harmony

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among themselves and amongst all the beings. They were told to be fearless and firm in their faith in God. At individual and social levels, they should present themselves as role models of personal piety and balanced social behaviour.

Raising of a New Missionary Organisation

The most striking achievement of the Guru in the field of spread of Sikhism, was the raising of a new organisation. Quite a number of *manjidars* and *masands* had earned notoriety for their dereliction in duties, self-aggrandisement, coercion and exploitation of the followers. Guru Hargobind had appointed his eldest son, Baba Gurditta, to streamline the missionary work. Baba Gurditta had established a network of missionary centres far and wide called *dhuén*. These centres rendered great service but still much more was required to be done.

Sri Guru Har Rai, therefore, raised a fresh complementary organisation to put more vigour and elan into the preaching work. He established three fresh missionary centres, each bearing the name *bakhshish* — grace. Eminent Sikhs under the leadership of Suthra Shah, Sangatia (or Pheru), Bhagat Gir, etc., were appointed to run these missionary centres. In view of Bhagat Gir's dedication to the cause of the Guru, people called him by the name of Bhagat Bhagwan. The Guru appointed him in-charge of missionary work in the East where he, along with his followers, established as many as 360 centres. Suthra Shah[27] took upon himself to preach Sikhism in and around Delhi. Another centre was established in the Lamma region between the Beas and the Ravi. Bhai Pheru was made the organiser in this area. With his vigorous efforts a large number of people embraced Sikhism. Bhai families of Kaithal and Bagrian were made responsible for the missionary work in the land between Jamuna and Satluj.

By the time of Sri Guru Hargobind, Sikhism had become a widely respected religion. According to one reckoning, in Sri Guru Hargobind's time, there were twenty nine Sikh centres outside Punjab, in central, north-western and southern parts of the subcontinent.[28] Sri Guru Hargobind had evolved a system to keep them attached with the 'abode of the Guru'. In Punjab, it goes to his credit that he deepened the impact of Sikhism in Majha and Doaba regions.

In the Malwa region too, a good start was made and Sikh ideology began to influence the life style of the people. Apart from the spread of Sikhism, the organisational aspect was also given due consideration. In different regions of the Punjab, the dominant organisation to keep the Sikhs vibrant with Sikh fervour was that of *masands / manjidars*, and while in the areas beyond Punjab, "not unoften the notable Sikhs were asked to take care of *sangats* as also to keep the Guru informed of what happened in their localities / regions." As the organisational network widened, certain *masands / manjidars* began to act independently, and in quite a number of cases took liberty to exploit the innocent flock, instead of preaching a virtuous life in the light of the Guru's teachings.

Sri Guru Har Rai strove hard to preserve and enrich the legacy of his forebears.

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He expressed his boundless missionary zeal to spread the gospel of Sri Guru Nanak, particularly in the Malwa region of Punjab, and fulfilled the task initiated by Sri Guru Hargobind. The organisational aspect of the Sikh movement was given specific attention. The Guru disciplined the wilful *masands* and *manjidars*. However, the *masands* of Lahore did not hesitate to misinterpret his *hukamnama* in order to help Ram Rai against the wishes of the Guru. The establishment of regular and systematic contacts with the *sangats* outside Punjab remained a problem. However, an organisation or system was evolving to keep regular contact with the Sikhs outside the state and to establish centres for missionary activities there. The Guru faced many problems in achieving his aims. First among these was that the government was hostile to the spread of Sikhism. Secondly, Dhir Mal and Ram Rai were bent upon opposing the evolution of the Sikh faith, and lastly, most of the *masands* had become self-seekers, self-centred, avaricious and self-assuming. Many of them even pretended to be the apotheosis of the Divine Himself.

The Guru and the Mughal Emperors

From 1634 CE onwards, right through the period of Sri Guru Har Rai, Shahjahan, the Mughal emperor, took only superficial notice of the Sikh activities, for under the influence of his dearest and eldest son, Dara Shikoh, who had Sufi leanings and was an ardent advocate of a liberal religious policy, the emperor contained his religious zeal. The relations between the Guru and Shahjahan further improved when the former supplied a rare medicine, in response to the latter's request, for Dara Shikoh who had fallen seriously ill, as his treacherous brother Aurangzeb had managed to administer some poison mixed in a dainty dish that was served to Dara Shikoh.

The medicine had the desired effect and Dara was perfectly cured. The emperor naturally had a soft corner for the Guru. Someone asked the Guru as to why he had saved the life of the son of Shahjahan who had been unpardonably cruel to the Guru's father and grandfather. The Guru replied, "Man plucks flowers with one hand, and with the other offers them to the people, but the flower retains its perfume in both the hands alike. The axe falls on the sandal tree, yet the sandal imparts perfume to the axe." The Guru told the questioner that in the Sikh faith there was no room for revenge, and to return good for evil was an accepted maxim of the Guru's message.[29]

Dara developed reverence for the Guru not only because of the medicine that saved his life, but also because he shared many principles of the Sikh faith, which were nearer to many tenets of Sufism. According to J.N. Sarkar, Dara paid many visits of respect to the Guru, as a part of his devotion to *sants* and *darveshes*[30] although the Guru was fifteen years younger than the prince.

On September 6, 1657 CE, Shahjahan fell ill, and the malady took such an acute turn that the daily *darbar* had to be stopped, and the emperor could no longer appear in person in the palace balcony to listen to the plaints of his subjects. A fratricidal struggle for succession to the throne began, in which Aurangzeb took a leading part. Dara Shikoh managed the affairs of the State in the absence of his father, and as crown

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prince was expected to succeed his father. But he had to reckon with three bellicose brothers, each in command of a province, and each a contender to the throne. Shuja was the governor of Bengal, Aurangzeb was down south in Deccan, Murad Bakhsh was the governor of Gujarat.[31] Shuja advanced from Bengal to force his claim, but was defeated, and made an inglorious retreat. Aurangzeb made Murad his ally and challenged Dara's well-equipped army in the battle of Samugarh. Both sides gave a heroic fight, but ultimately Dara was trounced and forced to flee. Raja Jaswant Singh and Raja Jai Singh, seemingly his trusted allies, turned their backs on him, and transferred their fealty to Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb imprisoned his father in the Agra fort. He contrived to declare his boorish brother, Murad, a dipsomaniac and threw him into Gwalior prison. Three years later, he had him beheaded by two slaves in the prison. Dara Shikoh moved to Delhi, and then rushed to Lahore where his faithful deputy, Sayyed Ghairat Khan, was at the helm of affairs, and where he himself was held in high esteem.

On way to Lahore, Dara visited Goindwal on July 1, 1658 CE,[32] and met Sri Guru Har Rai, who had been there in response to the invitation of the descendants of Guru Amar Das. According to Dr Trilochan Singh, Dara might have also waited upon revered Nanaki and Baba Tegh Bahadur on his way to Amritsar. During his meeting with the Guru, Dara sought his assistance. The Guru advised him to go to Lahore, gather an army and win allies. Next morning Dara came to know that Aurangzeb's army was pursuing him. Without loss of time, he left for Lahore, requesting the Guru to impede the progress of the pursuing army as far as possible. The Sikh sources are silent on this point, except *Mehma Parkash* which refers to the Guru's effort to place a strong guard at the ferry to check Aurangzeb's advance. Ernest Trumpp, J.D. Cunningham, J.N. Sarkar support this claim that the Guru covered Dara's flight by blocking Aurangzeb's troops on the Beas.

There are obvious gaps in the story. There arose no occasion immediately after Dara's departure from Goindwal to warrant the Guru to station his forces at river Beas near Goindwal. Dara left Goindwal on July 1, 1658 CE, while Aurangzeb reached Satluj nearly two months after the meeting between Dara and the Guru. Aurangzeb crowned himself on July 21, 1658 CE, and made a move to the Punjab after the coronation. Bahadur Khan was the first general of Aurangzeb to attack Dara's army at Ropar on August 5, 1658 CE. While Dara's army fell back from Satluj ferry to Goindwal ferry, Aurangzeb had reached the Satluj by this time. It was now impossible for the Guru to send any help to Dara's army at Goindwal, without coming into conflict with the huge army of Aurangzeb. Obviously, the statements of *Mehma Parkash* and of Cunningham, J.N. Sarkar, etc., need more supportive facts.

But this does not mean that the Guru did not support Dara's claim. As it has been pointed out earlier, the Guru had a lot of sympathy for Dara and blessed him and even assured him of military support if need be. J.N. Sarkar observes that the Guru had blessed the prince, when a fugitive in the Punjab, after the battle of Samugarh,[33] although he does not clarify the nature and kind of help.

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Dara reached Lahore on July 3, 1658 CE. The Guru also reached there a little later. But Dara was so terrified by the impending designs of his brother, that he decided to flee to Multan and then to Kandahar. He confided his intentions to his associates. This spread panic in the camp of Dara. Finding Dara not in a mood to put up fight, the Guru as also many others including Raja Rajrup left Lahore.[34] Sujan Rai wrongly insinuates that the Guru left Lahore giving false assurance that he would shortly rejoin the camp with a larger number of soldiers. The Guru, in fact, did whatever was right and possible. Dara himself had made up his mind not to fight. The evidence embodied in epitaphic inscription on Ram Rai's monument at Dehra Dun also confirms the view that the Guru rendered assistance to Dara.[35]

Dara Shikoh fled from Lahore on August 18, 1658 CE. On the next day, Aurangzeb took possession of Lahore as a strategic measure. Sri Guru Har Rai retired to village Galoti (district Sialkot)[36] and then proceeded to Kiratpur. A shrine in Galoti still commemorates Sri Guru Har Rai's stay in the village during the rainy season of 1659 CE.

Having made his position secure on the throne of Delhi, Aurangzeb embarked upon a religious crusade against the non-Muslims, especially the Hindus. We learn from Khafi Khan that Aurangzeb ordered that the religious places of the Sikhs be destroyed and the Guru's representatives (*masands*) who collected the tithe (*daswandh*) and presents from the faithful for the Guru, be expelled from cities. In 1669 CE, he ordered that the existing Sikh places of worship should not be destroyed but no new ones be allowed to be built. This was a moderate beginning of an aggressive policy which acquired unpardonable poignancy as time rolled on. Aurangzeb's religious policy was mainly actuated by the concept of Islamic polity, which was very close to his heart, and the notion that this would turn the majority of the Muslims in his favour, for many of the Muslims disliked Dara Shikoh for his Sufi leanings and disliked his father, Shahjahan, also for one reason or the other. As a corollary to his plan, it is not difficult to surmise that he could not ignore the Guru's meeting with Dara — whatever might have been its nature. Moreover, Aurangzeb was fully aware of the Guru's growing popularity which was a threat to the spread of Islam. The reports of some bigoted Muslims and Hindus that the teachings of the Sikh scriptures were an attempt to corrupt both Hinduism and Islam, also contributed to the government's hostility towards the Guru. No doubt, some of the closest advisers of the emperor like Mirza Raja Jai Singh spoke highly of the Gurus and their teachings, yet the emperor could not be convinced to change his opinion about the Guru until he met him. To this effect, the emperor sent an envoy with a letter to the Guru summoning him to his presence at Delhi.[37] The Guru wondered why the emperor wanted to meet him and, to quote *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, said, "I rule over no territory, I owe the king no tax, nor do I want anything from him. There is no connection of teacher and disciple between us either, of what avail will this meeting be ?"[38] Even then the Guru decided to send his elder son, Ram Rai, to the Mughal court. Ram Rai was told expressly that he would maintain the integrity and veracity of the faith of Sri Guru Nanak Dev whom he was to represent.

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He was strictly advised not to be cowed down, or intimidated, but to give exposition of Sikh scriptures without fear. He was asked to be loyal to his ideals, firm in his faith, and fearless and truthful in his exposition. He was given a copy of the *Adi Granth*,[39] in which *Moolmantar* had been written by Sri Guru Har Rai in his own hand. Although Ram Rai was quite young, his intellectual and spiritual training was of a very high standard. His assignment to the emperor's court was a test of his ability, spirituality and truthfulness.

The emperor, himself a great theologian, discussed the Sikh philosophy and asked innumerable questions to probe whether there was anything against Islam in Sikhism. It goes to the credit of Ram Rai that he made a spirited exposition of Sikhism, and convinced the emperor that there was nothing anti-Muslim in the Sikh philosophy. It was a universal faith, based on the experience of Truth and Absolute God. But a courtier mischievously pointed out two verses from a composition of Sri Guru Nanak Dev which were apparently critical of Muslims. The question about these lines came as a surprise to Ram Rai and when Aurangzeb asked him to explain the following verses, he quailed, fearing that the literal meaning of the first two lines might annoy the emperor and he might refuse to hear the essential meaning and philosophical explanation of the verses. Anxious to maintain the excellent impression he had already created on the emperor, he misinterpreted the verse. The hymn, read by the courtier, was as follows in English translation :

The clay of a Muslim's grave,
Falls into the hands of the potter;
Pots and bricks out of it he makes;
In the fire burns the poor clay.
As it burns it weeps and wails,
Shedding tears of cinders at its fate.
Says Nanak : God the Creator,
Who is the Causer of all causes.
Knows where departs and what befalls,
The soul of man hereafter.[40]

The verse only gives Sri Guru Nanak Dev's theory that the soul of man leaves the body and does not remain in the grave, as Semitic faiths believe, till doomsday. The graves of poor men are often dismantled by the potter for clay to make pots while the fate of the soul is known only to God. Out of cowardice, Ram Rai said that the scribe had by mistake written the word *Mussalman* in place of *béiman*, meaning a person without faith.

The explanation satisfied the emperor and the *ulema* in Delhi, but it invited the Master's ire, when the matter was reported to him by the Sikhs. To change the Guru's word meant a blasphemy that could not be pardoned. Moreover, Ram Rai went against the teachings of the faith by performing miracles which Sri Guru Nanak Dev condemns in no uncertain terms. *Sabad* being eternal, and the voice of God, its distortion or smudging is a sacrilege unpardonable.

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The Guru forthwith disinherited his son with the injunction that no true Sikh should, on pain of ex-communication from Sikhism, maintain any interaction with Ram Rai or his followers. "The Guruship", said the Guru, "is like a tigress' milk which can be contained only in a cup of gold. Only he who is ready to dedicate his life thereto is worthy of it."[41] The Guru even refused to see Ram Rai's face. The Guru loved his son intensely and had taken keen interest in his education and upbringing, but he did not let his paternal sentiments sway his stern disapproval of his son's cowardice and disloyalty to Sri Guru Nanak Dev's faith and philosophy.

Ram Rai begged forgiveness and personally called upon his father at Kiratpur, but he could not win back his father's confidence. He went to Lahore in the hope of persuading the Guru, through the *Sodhis* and *sangat* of Lahore to accept him back. Sri Guru Har Rai sent a *hukamnama* to the *sangat* of Lahore to disown Ram Rai and not to make him any offerings.[42] Ram Rai even requested his uncle Dhir Mal to intercede on his behalf but the Guru could not be convinced. He was firm in his opinion that Ram Rai did not deserve pardon, for he could stoop to such cowardly acts of sacrilege as distorting the *Sabad*. He was certainly not fit to carry forward the responsibility of spiritual sovereignty of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. About a month later, i.e., on September 23, 1661 CE, he appointed his second son, Harkrishan, as his successor and passed away on October 6, 1661 CE. As a sequel to it, Ram Rai turned hostile to the eighth Guru and the Sikh seat of authority, and in due course of time, like his uncle Dhir Mal, founded a renegade sect and made common cause with the Mughal authorities in a bid to disrupt the Sikh authority.

Syad Muhammad Latif, the author of the *History of the Punjab* (1889 CE), relying on Cunningham's *A History of the Sikhs* (1849 CE), states that Sri Guru Har Rai did not like Ram Rai on account of the latter's "independence" of character. He says that Ram Rai, being in the habit of making his own disciples, his father invariably made it a rule to speak of Harkrishan, his younger son, in public as apostolic successor though, at that time, he was a minor, about five years of age.

These scholars overlooked the fact that guruship among the Sikhs could be passed on only to the most meritorious. The law of primogeniture did not apply amongst the Sikhs. Further, *Sabad* being co-equal to God / Guru could not be altered, extended or subtracted. Tampering with it was a sacrilegious act never to be pardoned. Had they been able to grasp the import of Sikh ideology, they would not have justified the cause of Ram Rai. Independence of character is a great quality, and Ram Rai was not disinherited *because* of it but due to *lack* of it, as he had shown by cowering under the perceived displeasure of the emperor. His right, like any other Sikh, to be considered for guruship, was forfeited because he distorted the sacred *Sabad* which is the manifestation of God / Guru.

Aurangzeb did not take much cognizance of this incident, and initiated no action against the Guru, unlike his grandfather who had ordered the execution of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Taking cue from this, A.C. Banerjee raises a question, "Why did Aurangzeb not raise political issues with Ram Rai ?" He draws the conclusion that Aurangzeb

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did not consider the Guru's offence serious enough to deserve punishment. This led the learned scholar to conclude that Sri Guru Har Rai's sympathy for Dara did not extend to military aid[43] and Aurangzeb was, therefore, to begin with, conciliatory, not hostile, towards the Sikhs.

There is no tangible evidence about Aurangzeb's seriousness regarding the explanation of the political issues. It is almost certain that the Guru joined Dara at his camp at Lahore, but when he found that the prince had lost heart, the Guru quietly withdrew. These facts were well-known to Aurangzeb through his intelligence agencies and, therefore, it is wrong to presume that the Guru did not want to render military aid to Dara. The fact has been certified by Sujan Rai and Jadu Nath Sarkar. Aurangzeb did not take any strong action as he had his own reasons. Aurangzeb was still in the process of consolidating his position and was averse to taking stern action against the Guru who had a large following and had acquired a lot of influence in Punjab. Further, being himself a great general, he could assess that the Guru's help to Dara was not substantial; it was at the most symbolic. The Guru's military strength was also not large enough to pose any threat, immediate or otherwise, to the emperor. He of course did not like the Sikh movement — neither its political philosophy, nor its social stance. He, therefore, took to diplomatic artifice. Instead of dealing with the Guru through violence, he kept Ram Rai, understandably as a hostage, to put a check on the Guru's activities. When the Guru disinherited Ram Rai from guruship, the emperor propped him up with a large *jagir* of seven villages in Doon valley. He is said to have been granted an allowance of five hundred rupees daily for his public kitchen. The court helped him a lot in his moves to claim Guruship. Even after the ascension of Sri Guru Harkrishan to the *gurgaddi*, the imperial court continued to buttress Ram Rai's cause. In fact, the wily Aurangzeb wanted to weaken the Sikh movement by encouraging schism among the Sikhs, which, in his reckoning, had dangerous potentialities. The fact was known to him first hand as he had been the Governor of Sind and Multan from 1648 CE to 1652 CE. In Ram Rai, Aurangzeb found a pliant personality, with good contacts amongst the Sikhs, and thought he could use him to manipulate the Sikh affairs to his advantage.

On October 6, 1661 CE, Sri Guru Har Rai summoned all the ministers and missionary administrators of his *darbar* and addressed Diwan Durgah Mal, the chief of the Guru's *darbar* : "Do not let the imposter gurus, particularly Ram Rai, who is continuously being misguided by his *masands*, harm him (Sri Guru Harkrishan) in any way."[44] He then addressed his son Harkrishan, "Scrupulously avoid meeting Emperor Aurangzeb, and never visit his court. Fear not any earthly king, least of all Aurangzeb, and consider only God as the True King of kings."[45] Thereafter Sri Guru Har Rai's *atma* immersed in *Parmatma*. His body was cremated on the bank of Satluj near Kiratpur where his father and grandfather had also been cremated.[46]

Sri Guru Har Rai would miss no opportunity to inculcate in his disciples the noble sentiments of humility and altruistic service, without which, he said, mere knowledge of the existence of the Divine was of little avail. One day the Guru saw

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a wounded snake crawling with difficulty as it was ridden with worms. The snake's skin was sparkling in the warm sunshine of winter. Pointing it out, the Guru said, "This serpent might as well have been a *pandit* in his previous life — beautiful to behold in his dress, but the only knowledge he has is to bite. Men also bite others through jealousy; even when they talk about God, for it is not through love or humility but through invectives and poisonous fangs of controversy and argument." The Guru always advised his followers to cultivate love of God and abandon jealousy and boasts of knowledge.[47]

The Guru had boundless love for his devotees. Bhai Gonda was a devout Sikh whom the Guru thought fit enough to be given the duty to acquaint people with the *Sabad*. Gonda touched excellence in performing his duty to expose people to *Sabad*. He raised a gurdwara in Kabul and established a large *sangat* there.[48]

Once some Sikhs boasted that they managed *Guru ka langar* so well that no one ever returned disappointed from it. The Guru quipped that that was not enough. They ought to keep additional provisions for emergencies. They should serve food in such a way that no visitor should feel uncomfortable or awkward; he should rather have the feeling that he had come to the Guru's house and not to any charitable institution.[49] The Guru then made a very significant remark, "He who has more should consider it as God's trust and share it in the same spirit. Man is only an instrument of service; the giver of goods is God, the Guru of us all."

Impressed by the greatness of the Guru, in the year 1657 CE, Bhai Mai Das, son of Bhai Balu Ram, came from Alipur near Multan and presented to Sri Guru Har Rai his three elder sons, viz., Jetha 18, Dyal Das 15, and Mani Ram 13 years old. For two years, all the three sons served the Guru by washing utensils in *Guru ka langar*.[50] After two years Bhai Mai Das sought the permission of the Guru to go to Alipur to perform the marriage of Mani Ram who was then fifteen.[51] Mani Ram's marriage was performed with Sito Bai, daughter of an eminent Sikh, Lakhi Rai (later also known as Lakhi Shah) in *tehsil* Alipur of Muzaffargarh district.[52] After the marriage, the three brothers Dyala, Jetha and Mani Ram remained in the service of the Guru.[53] During these years Bhai Hira Nand, a devout Sikh and father of Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das, left for his heavenly abode. He was a great warrior-saint. Before leaving his body, he sought the Guru's blessing for his sons, Mati Das and Sati Das.[54]

Hunting was a part of a Sikh's training in those days. Sri Guru Har Rai had issued instructions that only ferocious animals like tigers, wild beasts or prowling man-eaters in the foot-hills of Kiratpur were to be hunted. Birds and beasts that could be tamed, were to be caught alive and kept with care.[55] Among the precious possessions of the Guru was a white elephant. The white elephant was the symbol of royalty and political prestige of the Guru.[56]

While staying at Kiratpur, Sri Guru Har Rai had a regular schedule of meditation, prayer and his duties as Guru. He took personal interest in the education, training, and the moral and spiritual progress of his devotees. Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims — all sought his blessings. The poets and mendicants would all repair to Kiratpur to receive the

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Guru's blessings. The whole atmosphere was filled with teachings of scriptures, divine poetry, music, moral and spiritual discipline of the highest order. The whole city was charged with the atmosphere of peace, hope, love in human brotherhood, and above all, fearlessness and freedom from bigotry and terror of the rulers.

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. We have followed *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*. *Suraj Parkash* gives *Magh* 1683 BK (January 1627 CE) as the date of the Guru's birth. We have preferred *Gurbilas* because it is an earlier composition than *Suraj Parkash*.
2. Santokh Singh, Bhai : *Suraj Parkash*, *Ras* 8, *Ansu* 53.
3. Kavi Saundh : *Gurparnali*, MS in Sikh Reference Library, F. 4.
4. Bhalla, Sarup Das : *Mehma Parkash*, Vol II, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, p. 634.
5. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., *Ras* 8, *Ansu* 53.
6. Trilochan Singh : *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, Delhi, 1967, p. 91.
   The year 1055 AH (i.e., 1645 CE) given by Mohsin Fani is wrong because the 3rd of *Muharram* that year did not fall on a Sunday, the day given by him. It agrees with the year 1054 AH (1644 CE), which also falls in with the Sikh chronologies. Mohsin Fani contradicts himself later on when he says that after his accession, Sri Guru Har Rai stayed for a year at Kiratpur, and still it was 1055 AH.
7. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 28:15.
8. *Punjab State Gazetteer*, Vol. III, Bilaspur, 1910.
9. Sri Guru Har Rai spent one year in Kiratpur, when in the year 1055 AH, Najabat Khan, son of Mirza Shahrukh, under orders from Emperor Shahjahan, mobilised his army and took possession of the country of Tara Chand and took the *raja* as prisoner. Sri Guru Har Rai went to Thapal which was near one of the possessions of Raja Karam Parkash near Sirhind. The Sikhs addressed Har Rai as "the seventh Mahal". He is well-known to the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*.
10. Since exact chronology of the Guru's visits is not available, only plausible chronological order has been followed.
11. To perpetuate the memory of the Guru's visit, a gurdwara named Harian Velan Gurdwara exists there. It is situated in the revenue limits of village Bajraur, 11 km south-east of Hoshiarpur.
12. The fact has been mentioned by Abdulla and Nath Mal in their *var*.
13. Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, p. 610.
14. Narottam, Tara Singh : *Sri Gur Tirath Sangreh*, Ambala, 1884, p. 62.
15. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit.
16. Gian Singh, Giani : *Itihas Riyast Bagrian*, pp. 33-36.
17. Ibid., p. 602. Also, Macauliffe, M.A. : *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 292.
18. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., p. 293.
19. *Itihas Riyast Bagrian*, p. 54.
20. The village was founded in 1711 BK (1654 CE).
21. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit, Vol. IV, p. 294.
22. Vir Singh, Bhai : *Gur Kirat Parkash*, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 228.
23. *Itihas Riyast Bagrian*, pp. 61-65.
24. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., p. 296.
25. Ibid.

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26. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : *Guru kian Sakhian*, ed. Piara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, 1995, pp. 45-46. "Sri Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru, son of Baba Gurditta, came to Srinagar and Kashmir *Sammat* 1717 BK", *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind.*
27. Suthra was born at Bahrampura near Bara Mula. His parents threw him outside their house, because they considered him ominous on account of his having been born with teeth in his mouth. Guru Hargobind while on tour in the Jammu-Kashmir region, heard the cries of the child and inquired what had happened to him. On being told that he was cast away by his family and extremely dirty being littered with refuse and dirt, the Guru called him Suthra — clean, and took care of him. He grew to be a great savant of Sikhism. He died in the time of Guru Gobind Singh. He was a good poet and wrote folk poetry full of affection and devotion to the Guru. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* also mentions him. According to Wilson, the original name of Suthra was Sucha (vide footnote 5 , pp. 55, 56 of Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*).
28. Dhillon, Balwant Singh : *Parmukh Sikh té Sikh Panth*, pp. 118-19.
29. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 279.
30. Sarkar, J.N. : *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1928, pp. 311-12.
31. Lane-Poole, S. : *Aurangzeb*, pp. 35-36.
32. Trilochan Singh : op. cit., pp. 106-07.
33. Sarkar, J.N. : op. cit., p. 311. The Guru blessed the prince, a fugitive in the Punjab after the battle of Samugarh.
34. Sujan Rai, in his work, *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh* states : "Having been defeated, Dara Shikoh rushed to Lahore where the im ending designs of his brother gravely terrified him and accordingly he decided to flee to Multan and Kandahar. He confided his intentions to his associates. Raja Rajrup exclaimed that he would go home to improve arrangements for mustering troops and leaving his son and emissary he departed. The Guru, who had come with his army, also left his camp with assurance that he would collect more troops for him."
35. Inscription as recorded by Ajit Singh Bagga in his book *Banur Had Orders.*
36. Sarkar J.N. : op. cit., p. 312.
37. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., pp. 306-09.
38. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 604.
39. Uptil recently this copy of *Adi Granth* was found at Dehradun. The date of completion of this copy was 1716 BK (1659 CE) *Vaisakh mah* (March month) *Vaisakh Vadi* 1. The copy was prepared only about a year and a half before Ram Rai left for Delhi.
40. Guru Nanak in *Asa di Var*, translated by Trilochan Singh in his book, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, on page 101.
41. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., IV, p. 310.
42. Puran Singh : *Book of the Ten Masters*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, p. 82;
    Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 617. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., *Ras* 9, *Ansu* 60, verse 42-45.
43. Banerjee, A.C. : *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion*, Delhi, 1983, p. 249.
44. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., *Ras* 10, *Ansu* 28, pp. 16-17.
45. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
46. Kanahia Lal : *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore. 1881.
    Ajit Singh Bagga, basing his conclusion on the authority of some Tibetan sources and the epitaphic inscriptions in the premises of Ram Rai's monument at Dehradun, says that poison was administered to the Guru at the instance of Emperor Aurangzeb who nursed a grudge against the former for his having aided Dara Shikoh in the struggle for succession. The evil deed was performed with the vicious aid of nefarious intriguer Ram Rai.

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The view does not find corroboration in any source. Dr. Bagga has not quoted what exactly his Tibetan source is. So far as the epitaphic inscription at Dehra Ram Rai at Dehradun is concerned the author himself went through the same and found no clue leading to such a conclusion.

47. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 282-83.
48. Ibid., p. 284.
49. Ibid., p. 286.
50. Sewa Singh : *Shahid Bilas*, ed. Garja Singh, Punjabi Sahit Academy, Ludhiana, p. 57.
51. Ibid., p. 56.
52. Ibid., p. 59.
53. Ibid., p. 56.
54. *Mahan Kosh* says that Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das were four brothers and all were sons of Bhai Paraga. Later researchers and the newly found documents, *Bhat Vahis*, give the correct chronology as follows : "Mati Das and Sati Das were sons of Hira Nand, grandsons of Lakhi Das and great grandsons of Parag Das. Both of them were executed by Aurangzeb along with Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur — *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi.*
55. The letter (*hukamnama*) of Guru Hargobind is preserved in Takht Patna Sahib. The letter states "Please acquire two young ones of *koel* and when they grow up and start singing then send them here in a cage. Also send *kuku kabutar.* Search them and acquire them as soon as possible".
56. Sarup Das Bhalla in his book, *Mehma Parkash*, p. 515, states that an exceptionally beautiful white elephant had been presented to Sri Guru Har Rai by his disciples of Uttrakhands (Lower Himalaya). Heinrick Zimmer states : "In the *Vedas* the elephant was the symbol of royal splendour. *Hastya Yur Veda* is the standard encyclopaedia on elephants. The owning of the elephants, it appears, was the prerogative of the kings. Elephants were hunted and captured in the wilderness and then kept in the forest reservations or in garrisons for the purpose of warfare. A special value is attached to the white elephants." (Heinrich Zimmer : *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilisation*, pp. 103, 107).

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NANAK VIII — SRI GURU HARKRISHAN

Sri Guru Harkrishan succeeded the seventh Nanak on September 23, 1661 CE, when he was barely five years old. The installation ceremony was performed by Sri Guru Har Rai himself. Even at that tender age, Sri Guru Harkrishan was conversant with *Gurbani* and its ideology. He had the gift of a melodious voice and used to recite *Gurbani* in musical intonation. He took every care that the devotees who came to Kiratpur were properly looked after. He would visit the ailing, and besides consoling them in their agony arrange medicines and appropriate nursing for them.

When Sri Guru Harkrishan assumed guruship, Aurangzeb, who had succeeded to the Mughal throne after killing his brothers and imprisoning his father, had launched a policy of religious persecution towards the non-Muslims and liberal Muslims. He so harassed Mullah Shah, a disciple of Mian Mir, that he (Mullah Shah) prayed to God to spare him the suffering which Aurangzeb was planning to heap upon him, and died of a heart-attack in the cell where his Master, Mian Mir had meditated. Sarmad was another liberal Muslim who fell victim to Aurangzeb's fanaticism and religious parochialism. A host of other liberal Muslims met the same fate. The policy of persecution of the Hindus was followed with much greater vigour — a fact which is vouchsafed by different edicts of the emperor issued from time to time. The Sikhs also were not allowed to live in peace. The emperor's asking the Guru to attend his court at Delhi was obviously in line with his general policy of harassing and chastising the non-Muslims and liberal Muslims.

In the case of the Sikhs, his concern was conspicuous for two reasons. In the first instance, the missionary activity of the Gurus had virtually halted the conversion of people to Islam in the areas of the Punjab across the river Ravi. Secondly, the Naqshbandis, whose headquarters were at Sirhind, and who exercised considerable influence over Aurangzeb, were dead-set to check the progress of Sikhism, which they reckoned as a potent threat to their scheme of weeding out the heretical and non-Muslim elements from the whole of the subcontinent, particularly in Kashmir, Punjab and Sindh — the areas contiguous to Muslim countries like Afghanistan, Persia and

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other neighbouring countries of Central Asia, to realise their dream of pan-Islamism. The political atmosphere being murky and discriminatory, Sri Guru Harkrishan's guruship could not be smooth.

There seems to be another reason also behind the motives of various kings and emperors inviting the Sikh Gurus to attend their courts. The Gurus accepted no earthly authority, temporal or spiritual, except that of God, and preached the same to their followers. The invitations to attend court were to force the Gurus to either accept the emperor's authority by supplicating to him or come into open conflict with the empire.

The Guru's difficulties increased still further because of the activities of Ram Rai and the Minas, as the followers of Pirthi Chand were contemptuously called by the Sikhs. Ram Rai, who was disowned and disinherited by his father, was not in a mood to reconcile to his fate. His *masands* threw themselves heart and soul into the campaign to convince the Sikhs that the rightful person to be the guru was Ram Rai. In support of this contention, they resorted to misinformation. For instance, they gave currency to the idea that certain *masands* had conspired to put Sri Guru Harkrishan on the *gurgaddi* at the death of Sri Guru Har Rai. They also contended that the guruship had in fact passed unto Ram Rai the day Sri Guru Har Rai sent him to Delhi in response to the summons of Aurangzeb. Ram Rai on his part harnessed all his political influence, his social and familial connections and his own personal ingenuity to make himself acceptable to the Sikhs as their legitimate Guru.

At the organisational level, many difficulties had cropped up by the time of Sri Guru Hargobind. Sikhism had spread to far-off places beyond the boundaries of the Punjab. Sikh *sangats* had emerged in north, west, east and south of the subcontinent of India. Even places outside the subcontinent, like Kabul, Ghazni, and Balkh had flourishing Sikh *sangats*. Dr Balwant Singh has identified twenty nine Sikh centres outside the Punjab.[1] In the Punjab, in the Majha region Sikhs had acquired considerable influence, while in Malwa region their influence was growing rapidly. The Doaba region also showed ever increasing inclination towards Sikhism. Sri Guru Harkrishan, perceptive to the sentiments of the Sikhs, was quick to administer to their spiritual and temporal needs.

The Guru started on a note of hope and optimism. He kept his calm even against heavy odds and grave provocation. People would come and inform him as to how his elder brother Ram Rai had sent out *masands* to win over the support of all the religious centres, and how they were using clandestine and deceitful means to promote the lie that Ram Rai had been installed as the successor to Sri Guru Har Rai. Sri Guru Harkrishan's attitude to all these things was that of one who always remains deeply immersed in the love of God and accepts His Will. He showed no ill-will against his brother. He believed that the mischievous propaganda would blow over leaving no adverse effect on true seekers of God's light. While Ram Rai was going from place to place seeking the support of Mughal rulers, the Guru continued to stay at Kiratpur and took a vow never to submit to the influence of the Mughal court. Prophethood is the gift of God and not a religious or political position which can be acquired

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through external influences.[2]

Some Sikh *sangats* living at places outside Punjab complained to Sri Guru Harkrishan against some corrupt and inefficient *masands* of their areas, and requested him to appoint learned men in their place. The Guru at once asked Diwan Durgah Mall to look into the matter and to send saintly and dedicated people as representatives of the Guru to these areas.[3]

One of the major activities of Sri Guru Harkrishan was to get copies of *Adi Granth* prepared by excellent calligraphers and scribes. He autographed some of these copies. One of these autographed copies is still preserved in the *Tosha Khana* of Takht Sri Patna Sahib.[4] The copy was probably presented to Patna *sangat* by the Guru.

Sri Guru Harkrishan would daily address individuals or groups of people who came to him with their problems and in quest of a peaceful and nobler life. A disciple would come and say, "Master, I am illiterate. I cannot read the scriptures. I cannot memorize them. Does that mean I would be deprived of liberation ?" Another Sikh would pay obeisance and express, "I am employed in the Mughal army and administration. What should I do, Master ?"

Sri Guru Harkrishan answered their queries and removed their doubts. To the illiterate, he advised that they should devote all their energy to the service and love of the needy and of those yearning for human sympathy. Listening to *Sabad* (Word), he would say, is as useful as its reading besides one can learn to read at any point in one's life. A Sikh's first and foremost commitment should be to God and His *Hukam*. He should avoid involvement in anything that comes into serious conflict with his faith.

Soon the stories of the Guru's wisdom, charity and compassion spread far and wide. One day Sri Guru Harkrishan went out on horseback to visit some neighbouring places. People came with simple and humble offerings. However, there stood a man, aloof from the *sangat* as if he was hesitant to come close to the Master. He was stricken with a deadly malady that lent him a horrible stench and loathsome appearance. He was a leper. The Guru's tender heart was filled with compassion. He went to him, placed his hand on his head and spoke to him with such profound concern and sympathy that the leper was moved to tears at the gentleness and grandeur of the Master's compassion and concern for him. For the first time in his life, he saw someone respect the dignity of his soul. The Guru's words awakened a new consciousness and a new power within him. He regained his inner strength and confidence, turned his face away from darkness to life. He felt that he was only a wounded soldier who had allowed his wounds to fester. He felt greatly relieved when the Guru told him that he had a soul as beautiful as everyone else had. The leper then saw many people who were dressed in glittering clothes and looked attractive but were in reality plagued with unbelief, cowardice, selfishness, and cruelty. His awakened consciousness, realised that more deadly and cancerous are the ills of the soul than those of the body. The faith in spiritual power released a new healing energy and his leprosy began to disappear.[5]

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The Guru's *hukamnama* (edict) to the *sangat* of Patna shows that within a year he had considerably consolidated his position even amongst distant *sangats*. Ram Rai's followers decreased and his influence waned greatly, especially in Punjab. Ram Raiyas' main stronghold was Lahore. A building to this day stands there as Ram Rai's *ashram*. All the successors of Ram Rai had to come to Lahore for missionary training and study of Sikh scriptures at the Lahore *ashram*.[6]

Having failed to win over the Sikhs to his side, Ram Rai resorted to another stratagem. He now actively sought Aurangzeb's patronage and help. The author of *Mehma Parkash* says that Aurangzeb (*Alam Patshah*), who was a strong supporter of Ram Rai, felt quite upset, and wondered why Sri Guru Har Rai had ignored the legitimate claim to the leadership of the Sikhs to such an *arif* (saint and philosopher) *kamal-i-karamat auliya* (saint perfect in the gift of miracles).[7]

Ram Rai in his meeting with Aurangzeb pleaded for his intervention. Aurangzeb agreed on his own terms. He saw in it an opportunity to realise his own religious mission. If he could get Ram Rai the guruship of the Sikhs, the latter would be a mere tool in his hands, and through him he would perhaps be able to spread Islam in the Punjab, or if he were able to set both brothers at variance, their power would be finished due to mutual hostilities and his purpose would be served.[8] The ultimate objective was to put a strong check on the progress of Sikhism and to play a decisive role in the affairs of the Sikhs, who brooked no interference into their spiritual affairs.

Accordingly, the emperor issued summons to the Guru to reach Delhi. Ram Rai and his chief *masands*, Gurbakhsh, Tara, and Gurdas (son of Bhai Behlo), were greatly elated on learning that Aurangzeb had at last summoned Sri Guru Harkrishan to Delhi. They considered it a great tactical victory for themselves. If the Guru presented himself to the emperor he would break his vow given to his father, which in turn would lower his prestige among his followers. If he came to Delhi and refused to meet the emperor, the latter would surely order his arrest and the Guru would suffer humiliation. Further, his arrest would cut him off from the Sikhs. And if the Guru escaped to the inaccessible regions of Shivalik Hills and continued to remain beyond the reach of the emperor, he would not only earn the wrath of the latter but also provide occasion to them to win over the Sikh community and instal Ram Rai as the eighth guru. They reckoned that they were sure to stand to gain from his arrival in Delhi. But they did not realise that the emperor had his own plans and motives and that he simply wanted to use them (the Ram Raiyas) as pawns in his political game.

The Sikhs of Delhi, apprehending something ominous, attempted to find some way out, and lobbied to ensure that nothing untoward happened to the Guru. They approached Mirza Raja Jai Singh, who was looked upon by non-Muslims as having a lot of influence with the emperor and as one who had the requisite potential to dilute the strictly communal and narrow approach of the latter.[9]

Jai Singh, at that time was sixty years old. In official hierarchy, he ranked immediately after the Princes of the blood. The reckless cavalier had now grown into a shrewd and cautious commander, a wise counsellor and skilful diplomat, employing four languages

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with equal ease. "In diplomacy he had attained a success surpassing even his victories in the field. Whenever there was a difficult or delicate work to be done, the emperor had only to turn to Jai Singh. His foresight and political shrewdness, his polite and cultured tongue and coolly calculating policy were in striking contrast to the impulsive generosity, reckless daring, blunt straightforwardness and impolitic chivalry associated with the Rajput character."[10]

In view of the seriousness of the task which, if not done with finesse, could lead to turmoil in Punjab — the thing most unwanted by the emperor in the initial years of his rule, he assigned the task to Mirza Raja Jai Singh to persuade Sri Guru Harkrishan to respond positively to the emperor's summons. Mirza took upon himself the responsibility to carry out the emperor's summons on an assurance from the emperor that as long as the emperor was not satisfied with the succession issue, Sri Guru Harkrishan would stay in one of Raja Jai Singh's bungalows as his honoured guest. Aurangzeb readily agreed, as it did not clash with his real game plan.

Raja Jai Singh sent a courtier named Diwan Pars Ram,[11] a wise and courteous man, along with gifts and presents, requesting the Guru to come to Delhi.[12] While delivering the *parwana* of the emperor and the presents from the *raja*, he very humbly made the following points — a) that his presence in Delhi would dispel the ugly impression created by Ram Rai and his crafty *masands*, b) that the morale of the Sikhs would be boosted, and c) that Aurangzeb would see for himself in what great esteem the young Guru was held by the Sikhs and what serious risks he would run by causing any harm to him. The Guru gave a patient hearing to the envoy, who was much impressed by the Guru's self-confidence, fearlessness and determination. Then the Guru called Pars Ram and asked him to make arrangements for his going to Delhi.[13]

Although Jai Singh had taken full responsibility for the safety of the Guru, he did not know that the Guru had given the pledge to his father that he would never allow himself and the Sikh religion to become a political tool in the hands of the Delhi rulers, and that he would not only keep away from the Mughal court but never make a voluntary appearance before the emperor.

Sri Guru Harkrishan remained unruffled as ever and made preparations for his departure to Delhi. Mata Sulakhni expressed her desire to accompany the Guru to Delhi. In the difficult circumstances, Mata Sulakhni deemed it her duty to be with the Guru. The Guru readily agreed to take her along with his followers. In addition, he took with him about twenty to thirty leading Sikhs prominent among whom were Durgah Mal, the *diwan*, his nephews Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das, the three dedicated brothers Bhai Jetha (later Jetha Singh), Bhai Dyala (Dayal Das), Bhai Mani Ram (later known as Bhai Mani Singh), Bhai Gurditta, and Gurbakhsh Mal.[14]

The Guru left Kiratpur sometime in the second week of February, 1664 CE. His first stoppage was at Dayalpur near Banur. He met there his sister, Roop Kaur,[15] who was to see her brother for the last time. He then reached Panjokhra where a Sikh humbly informed him of the expected arrival of *sangats* from Peshawar, Kabul and Kashmir.[16] He prayed to the Master to stay for a day so that the *sangats* from far-flung

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places could have an audience with him. The Guru bowed to the entreaties of his devotees. The *sangats* from the aforesaid places, and the devotees from far and near who were trekking their way to Kiratpur to attend the annual gathering on the *Vaisakhi* day, which was drawing near, converged on this place. The Guru blessed everyone and issued required instructions to them. He received humble offerings from them symbolising their love and devotion, joy and exuberance. The Guru exhorted them to learn to live in the light of the *Sabad*.

In that village lived a *pandit*, Lal Chand by name, who was proud of his high caste and profound learning. He came to see the Guru and tauntingly said, "It is said that you sit on the spiritual throne of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. But what do you know of the old religious texts ?"[17] The Guru called Chhajju Ram, a shabbily dressed and dark-skinned water carrier, who happened to pass by at that moment. Chhajju came and was asked to explain to the haughty *pandit* the gist of the *Bhagvad Gita*. The seemingly illiterate Chhajju astonished everyone by his enlightening commentary on the *Gita*. The point was brought home to the *pandit* that knowledge was not the exclusive monopoly of a Brahmin but could be gained by any person of any status — complete knowledge could not be gained without love which as a source of knowledge is placed superior to the human *episteme*.

Pandit Lal Chand was so amazed at this phenomenon that his pride in being a Brahmin and a scholar was shattered. He fell at the feet of the Guru and became a disciple, travelling with him up to Kurukshetra. In the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, he entered the fold of the Khalsa and took the name of Lal Singh, and courted martyrdom in the battle of Chamkaur on December 7, 1705 CE.[18]

At this time, another messenger sent by Mirza Raja Jai Singh arrived. He urged the Guru to proceed to Delhi without delay in order to avoid any misunderstanding, which might create complications. The Guru told the *raja*'s envoy that he would be reaching Delhi in the next few days.

When a large contingent of the Sikhs insisted on going along with him, he ordered that only the chosen members would constitute his entourage, all others were instructed to return to their homes.[19]

From Panjokhra the Guru reached Kurukshetra, the ancient place of pilgrimage which was visited earlier by Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Sri Guru Amar Das, Sri Guru Hargobind and Sri Guru Har Rai. The men-of-God who had come to the city were wonder-struck at the knowledge and spiritual gifts of the Guru. From Kurukshetra the Guru moved towards Delhi. On the way he made halts at Bani Badarpur, Karnal and Panipat, reaching Delhi in about a week's time.

Mirza Raja Jai Singh received the Guru. His son, Ram Singh, was also with him. As a mark of respect the *raja* made an offering of gifts and robes of honour. Sri Guru Harkrishan blessed him and other dignitaries. Then the *raja* received the members of the entourage of the Guru. After that the Guru and his party were reverentially taken to the *raja*'s army camp known as Jaisinghpura. The shrewd *raja* watched Sri Guru Harkrishan's personality, his character and disposition, to give an accurate account to

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the emperor. Sri Guru Harkrishan was found to be quite a contrast to his brother, Ram Rai. While Ram Rai was ambitious, and at times, betrayed cowardice and sycophancy, Sri Guru Harkrishan was majestically gentle in mien, humble but firm in conviction, fearless and indifferent towards worldly princes and potentates. Sri Guru Harkrishan entered Delhi like a prophet, with an outlook different from his magician brother. He was calm like a zephyr, firm like a rock, and creative like a spring, while his brother was self-centered, unprincipled and time-server. The Guru's wisdom silenced his detractors, comforted the sick, doled out hope to the distraught, and enabled the weak to grow strong. Sri Guru Harkrishan, unlike his brother, was not keen to meet Aurangzeb, the emperor, and ignored all suggestions of going to his court.[20] According to Khazan Singh, "The Guru was treated with great courtesy, and Prince Muazzam paid him a visit as a mark of respect. The Prince was highly pleased with his meeting with the Guru, and praised him a good deal before His Majesty."[21]

In about a week's time the Guru's influence in Delhi was visible. People of all shades and creeds flocked to him and listened to his enlightening discourses. Diwan Durgah Mal sent some of the trusted missionaries along with leading Sikhs of Delhi to counter the misleading propaganda conducted by Ram Rai's *masands* all over the city and the neighbouring areas. This step yielded rich dividends. One by one, the *masands* of the neighbouring regions came, and ignoring Ram Rai's claim to the guruship, offered obeisance to Sri Guru Harkrishan. The Guru blessed them with robes of honour and letters of authority to carry on the missionary work on behalf of the Guru's *darbar*. Ram Rai also sent his own letters to neighbouring regions in the Gangetic Doab but without much success. Now Ram Rai and his *masands* started using coercive methods. They threatened simple and innocent folks with curses and even with bodily harm.

The reporters of Aurangzeb had presented a favourable image of the Guru before the emperor. Raja Jai Singh explained to the emperor that guruship in Sikh religion, right from the time of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, was bestowed on the most meritorious and the deserving person. Aurangzeb was convinced that almost all missionaries and Sikh divines of the Punjab and neighbouring regions had unanimously accepted Sri Guru Harkrishan as the heir and successor to Sri Guru Har Rai, because he was installed by his father himself during his lifetime. The Sikhs of Delhi also presented this account in the court of Aurangzeb. Impressed by good reports of his wisdom, high opinion of Jai Singh and his wife, the universal acceptance of the Guru as the heir to the legacy of Nanak by the Sikhs, Aurangzeb dismissed the claim of Ram Rai,[22] but he did not announce his arbitration, for he wanted, as a matter of policy, to keep both the claimants under his thumb.[23] He, however, tried to satisfy Ram Rai by giving him a *jagir* (fief without fee) of seven villages, viz., Khurvedi, Dhamalal, Chamasari, Dhartanwali, Pundiwari, Mianwal, and Rajpura in the Doon Valley. Here Ram Rai later built a religious centre of his own called Ram Rai's Dehra,[24] and with passage of time the city of Dehradun developed around it.

The Guru at Delhi maintained perfect equipoise and spared no effort to animate the helpless, the destitute and the poor. He would not hesitate to move among such

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people to apply the balm of *Naam* to their lacerated hearts. He was always friendly and compassionate to the poor and graced them with blessings, that inspired faith in God and His mercy.

While the Guru was still in Delhi, a sudden outbreak of cholera gripped the city. Suffering and death following in its wake were alarming. The Mughal administration, in spite of its best efforts, was helpless to control the epidemic.

Sri Guru Harkrishan asked his physicians to accompany him to the affected areas. They delivered herbal medicines to the sick. The Guru spoke compassionately to every sick person. His presence and sight filled them with faith and hope. There was certainly something uniquely powerful in the personality of this boy-prophet, who brought to the disease-stricken city the sacramental spring of new life, a new bliss and a new dawn.

The Guru was acclaimed as a great healer. People in large numbers would throng the bungalow of Raja Jai Singh to have the blessings of the Guru. Raja Jai Singh had built a reservoir where the Guru stayed. The people with faith and devotion sought the water in it in the belief that it had been sanctified by the touch of the Guru.[25]

The people of Delhi, while still in the grip of cholera, were confronted with another menace — smallpox. People hesitated to even touch its victims. The Guru, however, fearlessly moved among them like a messiah of hope and peace. Soul-stirring hymns from scriptures, sung by the bards of the Guru, were a great solace to the sick and the dying. Death lost its sting. The Guru made everyone realise that the miracle of healing, through the blessings of the Master, was the miracle of *Waheguru*. He urged people to shed their fear of earthly kings and emperors, of the rich and the powerful and to serve only the One Lord.

Sri Guru Harkrishan gave food to the hungry, medicines to the sick, clothes to the poor, peace to the agonised minds, and light to the ignorant. Whosoever came to him, experienced joy and peace. The informers of Aurangzeb gave awe-struck accounts of the welfare activities of the Guru, with the result that Aurangzeb's long-cherished desire to see the Guru personally became poignant. He summoned Raja Jai Singh and Diwan Durgah Mal and ordered that Sri Guru Harkrishan must present himself in the imperial *darbar*.

Without any firm assurance, both of them promised that they would pass on the emperor's order to the Guru, who was busy helping the victims of the epidemics. They informed the Guru of the emperor's wish. The Guru remained silent for a moment and then said, "The Will of *Waheguru* will prevail." The Guru would spend the whole day serving the sick or discoursing with people and stay at the bungalow of Raja Jai Singh for the night. Now Aurangzeb fixed March 28, 1664 CE, as the date of his meeting with the Guru and asked Raja Jai Singh to make requisite arrangements.

Early next morning, on Friday, March 25, 1664 CE, the Guru delivered his last sermon and calmly declared that for the next five days he would remain in quiet retreat in the inner apartment of the palace. He would come to the audience hall just to give his blessings. The decision was momentous and a sort of open declaration that he

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refused to meet Aurangzeb — a step obviously fraught with dangerous ramifications. Raja Jai Singh immediately summoned the palace guards instructing them to protect the Guru in case a hasty arrest was ordered. The Guru remained unruffled and calm as ever. He was determined not to compromise the sovereignty which the first Nanak had bestowed on the Sikhs. He was not prepared to allow any earthly forces, in this case the imperial forces of Aurangzeb, to utilise the Sikhs as a tool for the advancement of their selfish interests.

By noon, Sri Guru Harkrishan had high fever due to smallpox. To those who had seen the sick and the suffering being healed by the Guru, it was difficult to comprehend how a great healer could himself fall victim to the same disease. The Guru at that moment uttered, "The suffering or the martyrdom of the Guru is in the redemptive spirit. The Guru is one with God's Light and Presence. His body, mind and soul never suffer any pain or sorrow, but he has to take upon himself the sufferings of the human world in a human way..... To lessen other people's suffering is an act of compassion, but to suffer for the fulfilment of God's Will is an apostle's response towards the supreme love of God."[26]

On the sixth day of the illness, when the Guru's condition worsened, he said, "My last moment in this vesture has come. Shortly, I shall be departing for my eternal home, the Supreme Abode — *Paramdham*."[27] Overcome with grief at this sudden utterance of her son, Mata Sulakhani said, "My son, my son ! Two and a half years ago, your father left for the heavenly abode at the age of thirty one. The wounds of separation were healed, my child, with your radiance in my fold. And now if you leave me in the darkness of loneliness, what would life mean to me ? What will these thousands of devotees do ? What alternative will they have other than becoming helpless victims of the intrigues of Ram Rai and Aurangzeb ?"[28]

Sri Guru Harkrishan replied, "Grieve not Mother. Sooner or later death comes to all. After the departure of my venerable father to the Realm of Truth, there never was even a minute's separation between him and us. It is his grace and power that has sustained me so far. It is the grace and power of Baba Nanak. After I leave my body, there never will be a moment's separation between you and me. It is by the Will of *Waheguru* I received the call to shoulder the responsibilities of *gurgaddi* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, and now it is His Will that I should depart from the earthly plane. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's *Panth* is built on unshakable foundation. It will grow into the most powerful force of divine wisdom and enlightenment of humanity. Of all the people, you my noble Mother, should be knowing this. The Eternal Light of the Guru will continue to shine in the world. The forces of darkness will bend their knees before the Light, which will shine in ever more resplendent form."[29]

The Sikhs asked the Guru who should be their Guru after him as Ram Rai was plotting in the Mughal court and Dhir Mal and other Sodhis were planning to revive their claims to *gurgaddi*. The Guru looked at Bhai Gurditta and asked him to bring a coconut, five pice, rosary and a sword, which were immediately brought to the presence of the Guru. He placed them on the ground, offered silent prayers and uttered "Baba

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Bakala" — The Baba is at Bakala. When asked to name him, the Guru again said, "The Baba is at Bakala."[30]

As soon as the emperor was told by Durgah Mal and Raja Jai Singh about the illness of the Guru, he gave up the wish to meet him. On the sixth day of the illness on the night of *Chait Sudi* 14, *Sammat* 1721 BK (March 30, 1664 CE), the Guru's *atma* merged with *Parmatma*.[31]

The body of the Guru was bathed and dressed in austere robes and covered with flowers. After prayer, it was placed on the bier. Bhai Gurditta, Diwan Durgah Mal, Raja Jai Singh, Kanwar Ram Singh were his pall bearers. As the funeral procession marched in slow measured steps towards Barapula, people followed in hordes to pay their last respects to the prophet. A funeral pyre was prepared on the bank of Jamuna on the exact spot where the Guru had pitched his tent earlier.[32] The last prayers were offered by Bhai Gurditta, the master of ceremonies. The pyre was then lit — the flames symbolising the light and love the disciples had received from the Guru.

Reflecting upon the ministry of Sri Guru Harkrishan we can affirm that by his own example, he brought many to the Sikh fold. At Delhi his demeanour was so impressive that within a very short span he became the cynosure of many eyes and the people held him in great reverence. He got copies of the Gurus' hymns prepared for their wide distribution. His immediate response to the Patna, as well as other far-flung *sangats*, testifies to his keenness to consolidate Sikhism. The wisdom and dignity with which he acted to dispel misunderstanding emerging among the Sikhs about the guruship after the claims of Ram Rai became known, was indeed admirable and portended well for the future of the Sikh religion. At Delhi he showed remarkable forbearance and firmness. Notwithstanding the machinations of Ram Rai and crafty Aurangzeb, he stuck to his stand of upholding the sovereignty and independence of the House of Nanak. He neither claimed any miraculous powers, nor did he submit to the might of Aurangzeb. His final act of nominating Tegh Bahadur as his successor was a firm rejection of any interference from Aurangzeb in favour of his protege, Ram Rai.

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. Dhillon, Balwant Singh : *Parmukh Sikh té Sikh Panth*, pp. 117-118.
   The centres were, Kandahar, Balkh, Ghazni, Kabul, Peshawar, Multan, Srinagar, Thanesar, Delhi, Fatehpur, Agra, Gwalior, Nanakmatta, Lucknow, Deonagar, Jaunpur, Paryag, Benares, Sasaram, Patna, Aligarh, Mugher, Raj Mahal, Sherpur, Dhaka, Laskar, Puri, Burhanpur, Ujjain.
2. Trilochan Singh : *Life of Sri Guru Harkrishan*, DSGMC, 1991, p. 92.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 92, 93.
5. Kanhyia Lal : *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 35.
6. Ibid. The place is known as *Ram Rai da Chabucha*, i.e., "The pond of Ram Rai."
7. Bhalla, Sarup Das : *Mehma Parkash*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1971, p. 633.
8. Macauliffe, M. A. : *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 318.

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9. Trilochan Singh : op. cit., p. 105.
10. Sarkar, Jadu Nath : *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 207.
11. Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, p. 261.
12. Santokh Singh, Bhai : *Suraj Parkash*, *Ras* 10, *Ansu* 39, verses 19-21.
    Also, Gian Singh, Giani : *Panth Parkash*.
13. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit. Also, Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 635.
14. Sewa Singh : *Shaheed Bilas*, ed. Garja Singh, Punjab Sahitya Acadamy, Ludhiana.
    Also see, Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit. *Ras* 9.
15. Bibi Sarup Kaur's husband had settled here after the death of Guru Har Rai.
16. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., p. 329.
17. Ibid., p. 322.
18. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 267.
19. Ibid., p. 268. Also, Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., pp. 320-321.
20. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : *Bansawali Nama*.
21. Khazan Singh : *History of Sikh Religion*, reprint, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, p. 144.
    Also, Macauliffe M.A. : op. cit., pp. 322-23.
22. Forster, George : *Travels in India*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, Vol. I, p. 260. "The cause, it is said, terminated in a permission being granted to the Sikhs to nominate their priest (Guru). When adjudging the contest, they elected Harkrishan."
23. Malcolm, J. : *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 9. " The dispute between Harkrishan and Ram Rai was referred to Delhi where both the parties went and by an Imperial decree of Aurangzeb, the Sikhs were allowed to elect their own priest (Guru). They chose Harkrishan."
24. The followers of Ram Rai are called Ram Raiyas and they are socially boycotted by the Sikhs as per the injunctions of Guru Gobind Singh.
25. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 236, and *Panth Parkash*, p. 263. "Raja Jai Singh got a reservoir constructed and filled it with water sanctified by the Guru (*charanamrit*)."
26. Trilochan Singh : op. cit., p. 157.
27. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 647.
28. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., *Ras* 10, *Ansu* 50, verses 18-22.
29. Ibid., verses 22-28.
30. *Parchian Patshahi Das*, p. 155; Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., *Ras* 10, *Ansu* 52, verses 25-26 and 29-36; Sukha Singh : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, reprint, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1989, p.8.
31. The time varies between midnight and dawn in various records. But all historical records, e.g., *Bansawali Nama*, *Mehma Parkash*, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, etc., are unanimous on the date.
32. Bhalla, Sarup Das : op. cit., p. 649.

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12

NANAK IX — SRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR

Introduction

The ninth Nanak, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, was the fifth and the youngest son of Sri Guru Hargobind, the sixth Nanak. He was born at Amritsar on April 1, 1621 CE, and was named Tyag Mal by his illustrious father, Sri Guru Hargobind.

Tyag Mal was brought up with loving care and attention. From his father he imbibed the noble qualities of fearlessness and the unconquerable will to fight tyranny, love of travel, skill in the use of arms, and above all the urge to uphold *dharam* (righteousness) at all costs. The prevailing atmosphere also contributed a lot towards his mental make-up. Amritsar, the place of his birth, had already assumed the role of the capital town of Sikhism. The sacred tank, the holy Harmandir rising in its pristine beauty in its midst, the Akal Takht, constructed to serve as the Supreme temporal authority of the Sikhs, and above all the charismatic presence of Sri Guru Hargobind, lent a rare grace and charm to the place. Devotees from far and near would come to this *Mecca* of the Sikhs to seek salvation. Everyday, morning and evening assemblies were held, prayers said, hymns sung (often to martial tunes) and inspiring discourses given on Sikh tenets. From the rise of the day till sunset, the Guru would remain busy in receiving *sangats*, who would come with offerings of weapons and horses that the Master greatly loved. He would exhort them to practise feats of physical strength, such as wrestling, *gatka*, and training in horsemanship and swordsmanship. Occasionally, he would find time to organise hunting expeditions, then considered the best mode of imparting training in war manoeuvres. All this left a deep imprint on the impressionable mind of young Tyag Mal. No wonder, he showed keen interest in learning the martial arts and developed fondness for hunting and preaching.

Tyag Mal was married to Gujri, daughter of Lal Chand of Lakhnaur near Ambala who had migrated and settled at Kartarpur (in district Jalandhar). Tyag Mal's brother-in-law, Kirpal Chand, who rose to prominence under Sri Guru Gobind Singh, also migrated with his father, while Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's elder brother-in-law, Mehar Chand, continued to live at his ancestral place. Family links were thus maintained

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with Lakhnaur. Tyag Mal was an eye-witness to the battles which his father had to fight against the Mughals. His physical presence at Amritsar, Kartarpur and Phagwara at the time of fighting is undoubted, though about the battle of Lehira, it is not possible to say anything definitely. This shows that Tyag Mal along with other members of his family had to pass through arduous times.

In the battle of Kartarpur (April 26, 1635 CE) when the Mughal forces under the overall command of Kalé Khan and Paindé Khan attacked Sri Guru Hargobind, Tyag Mal fought valiantly in the rearguard of the Guru's army. Fearlessly he rode into the thick of the battle and using lance and sword worked havoc in the enemy ranks. The father, Sri Guru Hargobind, was so pleased with his heroic performance that he addressed him as Tegh Bahadur (Warrior of the Sword). Henceforth, Tyag Mal became Tegh Bahadur.

During the last phase of his life, Sri Guru Hargobind settled at Kiratpur. He continued the programme of training the Sikhs in the art of warfare, horsemanship and organising hunting expeditions. Occasionally, he would visit the hills and plains to preach the Sikh precepts. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur took keen interest in all these affairs and would often accompany the Guru on his hunting expeditions and missionary travels. In the last week of February, 1644 CE, Sri Guru Hargobind invested Har Rai with Guruship and asked all Sikhs to henceforth follow the seventh Nanak. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was the first to bow to Sri Guru Har Rai.

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, with his wife and mother, went to Bakala, a historic village in Amritsar district about two and a half miles north of the Beas railway station.

For nearly twenty years (1644-64 CE) the Guru lived at Bakala in the house especially built by Bhai Mehra[1] for the Guru. Baba Dwarka Das, the descendant of Sri Guru Amar Das and eminent Sikhs of Amritsar district, like Bhai Gurhia and Baba Gurditta, would visit him and bring the news of Lahore.[2] Here he attended to the duties of a householder and would go hunting occasionally.

After staying at Bakala for about twelve years, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, with his family, decided to visit some of the places of the subcontinent which were associated with the Gurus. Their first visit was to Kiratpur,[3] and from there they went to Kurukshetra around the middle of 1656 CE. From Kurukshetra they set out for Hardwar reaching there on March 29, 1657 CE.[4] Having stayed there for three months, the party left for Prayag via Garh Mukteshwar, Mathura and Agra. The party reached Prayag[5] in the beginning of 1661 CE. After a month's stay there, the onward journey was resumed. The party reached Kashi (Benares) on 21st June, 1661 CE. From Benares the Guru reached Sasaram and then Gaya where he met Bhai Jetha Seth, a devoted Sikh of Sri Guru Hargobind, who took him to Patna. It was here that the news of the passing away of Sri Guru Har Rai, *Katak Vadi* 9, 1718 BK (October 6, 1661 CE), reached him, and he decided to return to Kiratpur to condole the death of the seventh Guru. On the way back he, along with his party, arrived at Prayag[6] on 5 *Magh* 1719 BK (January 3, 1663 CE). When he was approaching Delhi he learnt that

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the late Sri Guru Har Rai's son and successor, Sri Guru Harkrishan, had arrived in Delhi. The actual date of his arrival at Delhi was March 21, 1664.[7] Tegh Bahadur stayed at Dharamsala Bhai Kalayan for some time where a large number of devout Sikhs paid their respects to him. Baba Ram Rai also called upon him at this place and informed him in detail about the visit of Sri Guru Harkrishan to Delhi. Shortly after, Tegh Bahadur, accompanied by his mother and other people, waited upon Sri Guru Harkrishan and his mother, Mata Sulakhani at the residence of Mirza Raja Jai Singh and expressed profound sense of sorrow and sympathy in their bereavement. Then he left for Bakala.

On March 30, 1664 CE, Guru Harkrishan lay on his death-bed. The Sikhs asked him who would lead the *Panth* after him. The Guru uttered, "Baba Bakala", meaning that his successor would be his 'Baba' living at Bakala, and in token thereof he entrusted the spiritual regalia (five pice and a coconut) to Diwan Durgah Mal. According to *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind* and *Guru kian Sakhian* by Sarup Singh Kaushish, the Guru did not leave any vagueness[8] in his statement and actually mentioned the name of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur to be the next Guru, and entrusted Diwan Durgah Mal to take the articles of spiritual regalia to Bakala and personally offer them to the successor Guru. The news of the passing away of Sri Guru Harkrishan spread far and wide, but somehow the information that reached Bakala and the country around regarding the nomination of the successor was incomplete and vague with the result that many pretenders declared themselves to be the successors of Sri Guru Harkrishan, and the problem of finding the true Baba, which at first had seemed simple and logically conclusive, now became complicated. There were twenty two pretenders[9] who set themselves up at Bakala as successors to Sri Guru Harkrishan.[10] The Sodhis of Lahore, the Mina Sodhis of Amritsar, the descendants of Suraj Mal and many impostor Sodhis who acquired certificates from Pandas declaring that they were Sodhi Babas, set up tents and employed agents to do propaganda for them, and win supporters even on payment. All material means of inducement including bribery and enticements were used by the paid advocates and propagandists of each imposter guru.[11] The most vociferous and conspicuous claimant, however, was Dhir Mal, who was the first to pitch his camp at Bakala. There were two attractive features of his claim to guruship — one, that he was the only direct descendant of the eldest son of Sri Guru Hargobind, Baba Gurditta, whose son and grandson had so far reigned as the seventh and eighth Guru respectively and secondly, he possessed the first compiled copy of *Adi Granth* prepared by Sri Guru Arjun Dev.

A few months passed in this state of confusion and then on August 11, 1664 CE, a Sikh *sangat* from Delhi arrived at Bakala in obedience to the late Guru's command for the installation ceremony of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. The *sangat* was led by Bhai Durgah Mal, the son of Dawarka Dass Chhibbar. The *sangat* included several eminent Sikhs such as Chaupat Rai, son of Pera and grandson of Ballu and great-grandson of Mulu; Mani Ram son of Mai Dass and grandson of Ballu; Jammu, son of Padma and grandson of Kaula; Gurbaksh, son of Baba; Nanu, son of Baba and grandson of

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Unaida; and Mata Sulakhani, mother of Guru Harkrishan.[12] Baba Gurditta, son of Baba Budha, and Dwarka Dass, son of Arjani Sahib, and grandson of Baba Mohri, were also there at the investiture ceremony.[13] The ceremony was held in an open *divan* and was conducted by Baba Gurditta. Diwan Durgah Mal informed the assemblage about the late Guru's decision of appointing Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur as his successor.

Even then a few months passed in confusion. During this period, unworried by what Dhir Mal and other impostors were doing and confident that truth would ultimately prevail, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur went about his work unhindered. Ten days after his succession he, accompanied by Dwarka Das, Diwan Durgah Mal and Jaggan, went to Kiratpur to condole with Bibi Roop Kaur the deaths of her father, Sri Guru Har Rai, and brother, Guru Harkrishan.[14] The visit coincided with the ceremony of the immersion of the late Guru's remains in the waters of the Satluj on 22nd August.

On *Diwali* day (October 9, 1664 CE),[15] Makhan Shah, a Lubana trader,[16] came to Bakala from Tanda, a village in Srinagar territory. According to Sikh accounts, he had come to offer 101 gold *mohars*, which he had vowed when his ship, laden with merchandise, had been saved from sinking by a prayer to the Guru. But, on reaching Bakala, he was taken aback to find many of the Sodhi pretenders setting themselves up as Guru. According to Sikh accounts, Makhan Shah hit upon a plan for identifying the true Guru. He started offering two *mohars* to each instead of 101 *mohars*. He thought that the real Guru would himself demand the remaining 99 *mohars*. When he was convinced of the falsity of the pertenders, he enquired if there was any other Sodhi. Someone informed him of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur who was living in solitude and had no truck with the people outside.

He then went to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. He made obeisance to him by placing two *mohars*. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur said, "O Sikh ! you promised an offering of 101 *mohars* when the ship was sinking, why do you hesitate to pay the remaining 99 *mohars* ?"[17] This made Makhan Shah very happy, and waving his flag proclaimed from the housetop, "I have found the Guru ! I have found the Guru !" On hearing this, the Sikhs assembled from every quarter to learn from him how he had made this discovery. His dramatic story carried conviction to the vast crowd gathered there.

From these accounts it would appear that Makhan Shah did not know Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. It does not, however, sound correct. Makhan Shah had been the follower of Sikhism since long. When Sri Guru Hargobind visited Kashmir he waited upon him, and, at his request, the Guru visited Tanda, a village founded and developed by Makhan Shah himself on the bank of the river Jhelum. Sri Guru Har Rai too commanded his devotion. He also paid a visit to the eighth Guru at Delhi. He was a well-known Sikh and had acquaintances with almost all the important Sikhs of Kashmir or those who were permanently attached to the Guru's household. In the face of all this, it is unlikely that Makhan Shah did not know Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur or what Sri Guru Harkrishan meant by 'Baba Bakala'.

This being so, he ought not to have offered two *mohars* to each Guru as a strategy

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to find out the real Guru. The truth seems to be that he visited Bakala with his men to offer 101 gold *mohars*, but on finding that the impostors were creating confusion, he and his men took up the cause of the Guru so vigorously that the impostors were completely exposed. When Makhan Shah visited the Guru, his two sons, Lal Chand and Chandu Lal, and his wife Solji were also with him.[18]

In this way, the Guru could assume the undisputed charge of the Sikhs only after nearly six months and a half. The Guru appointed Mati Das and Sati Das as *diwan* and minister of *darbar* and Bhai Dyal as the household minister.[19]

Determination of identity of the true Guru put an end to the pretensions of the imposter gurus. But Dhir Mal did not reconcile with the turn of events; on the other hand, he was determined to snatch the guruship by force. He felt that the peace-loving pacificism of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was no match for his armed might and money power. He hatched a plot to kill the Guru with the help of his *masand*, Shihan, who with about a hundred armed ruffians, attacked the house of the Guru. Shihan aimed a bullet at Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and fired point-blank. The bullet only scratched the surface of his shoulder without causing any serious wound. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur stood calm and composed as if nothing had happened. Diwan Durgah Mal, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Dayal Das and Kirpal Chand provided cover to the Guru, hitting anyone who came near them. Before Shihan could reload his gun, Kirpal attacked him and wrenched the matchlock from his hand. At this Shihan and his men ran away, carrying with them all that they could get hold of. The whole operation was conducted under the supervision of wicked Dhir Mal.

When the Sikhs learnt of all this, they attacked the house of Dhir Mal under the leadership of Makhan Shah and Kirpal Chand.[20] They not only retrieved the things plundered from the Guru's house, but also carried away some of Dhir Mal's belongings.

Besides this they took possession of the copy of the *Adi Granth* lying with Dhir Mal. Dhir Mal and Shihan were handcuffed. The Guru forgave them and ordered the Sikhs to return the articles looted from Dhir Mal's house. The Sikhs returned everything but the copy of *Adi Granth* which they considered to be the property of the Sikhs and not a private belonging of Dhir Mal. Later on when Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur came to know of it, he persuaded the Sikhs to return it.

On November 22, 1664 CE, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur left for his birthplace, Amritsar, to pay homage to the sacred place. He bathed in the sacred tank, but the ministers of the Harmandir shut its doors on him, and he was not allowed to enter the holy precincts.[21]

Under the circumstances the Guru thought it advisable to return to Kiratpur. On the way back, in view of the sincere devotion of Mata Hariyan, he stayed at the village Walla near Amritsar. Leaving Amritsar, the Guru decided to spend some time touring the Majha and Malwa regions of the Punjab before proceeding to Kiratpur. The Guru reached Dhamdhan in the Bangar area (which is, in fact, an extension of Malwa) on the occasion of *Vaisakhi* of 1665 CE. He liked the place very much and decided to develop it into a centre of Sikhism. With this view, the Guru gave some money to Bhai Daggo,

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a devoted *masand* of the place, and gave instructions to him to raise a building with a well for water supply and to desilt the tank nearby, which was later named Gurusar.

The Guru reached Kiratpur in the beginning of May 1665 CE. On May 13, 1665 CE, the Guru attended a ceremony related to the death of Raja Dip Singh of Bilaspur. Mata Nanaki, Mata Hari (Baba Suraj Mal's wife), Deep Chand and Nand Chand (sons of Baba Suraj Mal), Diwan Durgah Mal, Jetha, Dayal Das, Durga Das (son of Padam Rai Hajabat), and Dariya Khan (son of Mula Jalhan) were with the Guru.

The Guru was received respectfully by Rani Champa and she did all she could to make the Guru's three days stay comfortable. During his stay, the Guru expressed that he would like to build a new settlement somewhere near Kiratpur and offered to buy a suitable piece of land for the purpose. The Rani consulted her minister and offered to donate the site of Makhowal.[22] The Guru highly appreciated the spirit of devotion in which the offer was made, but he preferred to buy it.[23] The Rani was not willing to receive anything, but ultimately the Guru prevailed upon her to accept a token amount of Rs 500.[24] On returning to Kiratpur, the Guru instructed Diwan Durgah Mal to make a careful survey of the land. This done, the foundation stone of the new *basti* was laid by Baba Gurditta, the son of Baba Budha on June 19, 1665 CE (*Harh 21*, 1722 BK). This new *basti* was named Chak Nanaki, after the revered name of the Guru's mother. In the course of time, the beautiful town of Anandpur Sahib grew up around it.

Eastern Tours

The Guru did not have a prolonged stay at Chak Nanaki. He appointed his trustworthy followers to surpervise the construction work there and he himself left for missionary travels (August, 1665 CE). What were the factors which prompted him to go on tours while it was expected that the Guru would stay at Chak Nanaki for sometime to watch the growth of the new settlement ?

The Guru undertook tours to strengthen the spiritual ties with the *sangats* of the East who felt out of touch with the developments in the Panth. According to Dr Trilochan Singh, the Guru undertook tours in response to the invitation of some Sikhs from the East, namely, Bhai Bulaki Das and Bhai Hulas Chand from Dhaka and Bhai Darbara and Bhai Chain Sukh from Patna, who met the Guru at Kiratpur and begged him to visit their areas.[25]

The Guru left Makhowal for the East in August, 1665 CE. His first important halt was at Saifabad, now named Bahadurgarh in commemoration of his visit. The Sikhs accompanying him included Sati Das, Mati Das, Gwal Das, Gurdas, Sangata, Jetha and Dayal Das. Nawab Saif Khan, who had served Aurangzeb as governor in Agra and Kashmir, had Sufi leanings and accorded a warm welcome to the Guru at Saifabad waiting upon him with reverence.[26] On the eve of the Guru's departure, he made presents of a horse, camel, a tent and a chariot. He held the stirrup respectfully as the Guru mounted the horse to resume the journey.

From there the Guru reached Dhamdhan in the Bangar Area. This was the second

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visit of the Guru to this place. The purpose of the Guru seems to have been to see for himself the progress of his projects at the place whose care he had assigned to the local *masand*, Bhai Daggo, when he had visited the place earlier. Besides this, the Guru wanted to reinstruct the *masand* to follow the Guru's teachings with sincerity and devotion. In fact, the Guru was interested in developing it into a major centre of Sikh faith. The Guru was much pleased at the wonderful work done by Bhai Daggo. The Guru also admired the missionary work of Bhai Pheru. He conferred upon him the panegyric : "Clean is thy beard Bhai Pheru; durable is thy devotion; virtuous are thy actions; thou shalt be reckoned of consequence in the world. The Guru is a sacrifice unto thee, Bhai Pheru."[27]

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's arrival at Dhamdhan must have been sometime prior to *Diwali* because the day was celebrated by organising a fair which was attended by large crowds of people. On *Katak Sudi* 11, Alam Khan Rohilla suddenly appeared with imperial orders from Delhi and arrested him along with Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Gwal Das, Bhai Gurdas son of Kirat Barhtia, Sangat son of Binna Uppal, Jetha and Dayal Das and several other leading Sikhs in attendance upon the Guru.[28]

According to one of the *Buranjis*[29], the orthodox Ulemas and Brahmins were much upset at the deep impact of the teachings of the Guru and had complained to the emperor that the whole atmosphere was being vitiated by the Guru. The emperor, Aurangzeb, wanted to order the execution of the Guru but through the intercession of Ram Singh, the emperor did not order the execution. According to *Bhat Vahi Jado Bansian*, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur remained with Raja Ram Singh for a period of about one month. On December 13, 1665 CE (Poh 1, 1722 BK), the Guru left the place of Raja Ram Singh.[30]

The next important halt was at Mathura, from where he reached Agra, which had a Sikh centre built in the memory of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to the place. Here he stayed in the house of one old pious lady, Mai Jassi, in Mai Than Mohalla of the city where now a gurdwara exists in memory of the Guru's visit. From there, the Guru and his entourage moved on to Etawah, Kanpur, Fatehpur and reached Allahabad early in March 1666 CE. At Kari Nanakpur, 65 kms northwest of Paryag (present-day Allahabad), Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur converted a Vaishnava Sadhu, Maluk Das. He was surprised to see Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur accompanied by armed disciples who hunted animals. But on beholding the Guru, his doubts disappeared as clouds disperse before high winds. He fell at the Guru's feet. The Guru blessed him and honoured him by visiting his hutment. Next important halts were at Mirzapur and Benares. At Benares the Guru camped for many days. According to Dr Fauja Singh, "Like the other places, he had visited Benares before more than once and felt quite at home among his devotees, chief among whom was Bhai Jawahri Mal." As the local tradition goes, the white horse, Sri Dhar, gifted to him by Saif Khan of Saifabad, fell ill and subsequently died at this place. Then the Guru moved to Sasaram where he met a prominent Sikh missionary Phagu Shah who lodged the Guru in a beautiful new house which has since become a holy shrine.[31] Having visited Bodh Gaya, Raigarh, the Guru

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reached Patna towards the end of May, 1666 CE.

The heads of the Patna *sangat*, Ram Rai and Bhai Durbari, made excellent arrangements for the stay of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and his family. A devout lady, known as Mata Paidi, looked after Mata Nanaki and Mata Gujri (who was expecting her first child). The Guru spent the early months of the rainy season at Patna. During this period, he organised the missionary work in Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other neighbouring areas by placing all *sangats* of these areas under the unified command of Bhai Dayal Das, who by his sincerity and devotion had risen high in the estimation of the Guru. Sometime around the *Dussehra* festival, a few prominent Sikhs of Dhaka waited upon the Guru and entreated him to visit and bless their areas as well. The Guru agreed to go with them at once entrusting his family to the care of the Patna *sangat*.

The Guru proceeded to Dhaka via Monghyr, Colgong, Sahibganj, and Kant Nagar. The last named place was subsequently wiped out by the floods and the inhabitants moved to a new site towards the north, now known as Lachmipur. Many people in this area still profess Sikh faith.[32]

The prominent disciples who accompanied him were Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Baba Gurditta, son of Baba Budha. From Kant Nagar, the Guru reached Malda, a great Sufi centre. Here the Guru is believed to have stayed for more than a month during which he had exchange of ideas with the learned men of the area on religious questions. The Muslim saints were much impressed by the piety and spiritual splendour of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. From Malda, the Guru reached Dhaka at the end of October 1665 CE, passing through Godagari and Gopalpur. According to Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, there flourished quite a network of prosperous Sikh *sangats* and ministries all over. There were Sikh *sangats* in existence at Raj Mahal in the west of Sylhet, Dhubri in the east, Bansbhali to the north and Fateh Kachehri in the south. In fact, there was hardly a place of importance during the days of Mughal viceroyality where some Sikh gurdwara did not exist or some Sikh ascetic (Udasi) had not established himself and gathered a number of followers around him. The movement had spread even to some islands like Sondip, as early as Shahjahan's time. "These *sangats* were not only places of worship, but as usual served the useful purpose of wayside inns where food and shelter were given free to the poor and the indigent wayfarers."[33] These *sangats* had been well-organised by Almast and Natha Sahib.[34] Dhaka was the *Hazuri sangat* or the head *sangat* of these parts with a number of others under its care, and in turn was controlled by the Guru from Makhowal. Besides local *sangats*, there were always a number of Sikh merchants from the Punjab and Sindh, who were always anxious to keep themselves connected with their spiritual guide. No wonder, the Guru received great respect from the people of Dhaka whose association with the Sikh faith went back to Sri Guru Nanak Dev's time. Bhai Bulaki, the local *masand* and Bhai Natha, the disciple of Almast, did their best to make the stay of the Guru comfortable. The place where the Guru used to hold *darbar* is marked by a gurdwara called Sangat Tola Gurdwara. It was here that he received the

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welcome news of the birth of his son at Patna on December 6, 1666 CE. The Guru wrote a letter of thanks to the *sangat* of Patna for looking after his new-born child. From this missive and others it appears that there was no prospect of his return in the near future because he hoped that his family would continue to be looked after as before. From Dhaka the Guru left for Jantia Hills and Sylhet (early in the year 1667 CE) where he established the Sylhet *sangat*.[35] After spending the rainy season at Sylhet, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur moved south towards Chittagong and Sondip. He passed through Shairtaganj and stopped at Agartala, the capital of independent Tripura State. From here he went to Chittagong where he stayed up to the end of the year 1667 CE.[36] During his stay at Chittagong he established a large religious centre which flourished so much that during the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh it provided weapons and war material for the fighters. Passing through Noakhali, Chandpur and Narayan Ganj, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur reached Dhaka in the middle of 1668 CE to conclude his visit.

Visit to Assam

In December, 1667CE, the Ahoms captured Guahati (presently Guwahati), and Aurangzeb, in order to retrieve the lost prestige, resolved to dispatch a strong contingent to oust the Assamese. Accordingly, Raja Ram Singh, son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh received the imperial mandate on January 6, 1668 CE, to accomplish the arduous task, because the climate of Assam was not congenial for the Mughal soldiers, and secondly, the Assamese were held in awe because of their necromancy. To enthuse the soldiers and to build their morale, Raja Ram Singh took with him five *pirs* of Malda.[37] While reaching Monghyr, the *raja*, who had deep reverence for the House of Nanak and regarded Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur a rich repository of spiritual power resolved to take Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur along with him.[38] Accordingly, he requested the Guru to accompany him. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur had already planned a tour of Assam, and so he readily accepted the offer.[39]

Raja Ram Singh and the Guru left for Dhaka and reached Dhubri in February, 1669 CE. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur *en route* to Assam, sometime toward the close of the third quarter of 1668 CE, encamped at Dhubri, while Raja Ram Singh camped at Rangmati, the Mughal outpost near the frontier of Assam.

Soon after, the war between the Mughals and the Assamese forces ensued. Raja Indra Daman Singh was in command of the Assam army of the Ahom King Chakradhwaj.[40] The Mughals pressed their opponents hard but the decisive victory was not easy to get because of the difficult mountainous terrain, insalubrious climate, and heavy torrents during the rainy season which impeded the rapid movement of the Mughal forces, unacclimatised to the climate and the hurdles of the terrain. Moreover, the Assamese were determined to fight to the last to keep Guahati, the seat of their culture and government, intact. However, as the Sikh tradition goes, the fabled witchcraft, or sorcery of the Kamrup women, had had no effect on the Mughal soldiers.[41] But the Guru and his Sikhs did not participate in the battle. The assertion of

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Cunningham that the Guru was fighting for Ram Singh or was employed by him is a sheer fiction. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's own letters give us a clue about his movements in the area.[42]

In the meanwhile, certain factors brought a change in the moods of both the parties engaged in warfare. The reverses which the Ahom King had suffered toned down his enthusiasm. Similarly, the realities of the situation dawned on the Mughals as well. Ram Singh was convinced that the attempt to have a clear victory would mean a long drawnout and desultory warfare, which was neither advisable nor practical.

Sensing the change in the mood of the contending parties, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur attempted their reconciliation and a negotiated settlement was arrived at. According to the agreed terms of peace, the old boundaries were to be maintained.[43]

In token of complete harmony, the Guru invited the soldiers of both armies to join together and, filling their shields with earth, raise a mound at Dhubri in memory of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. At the foot of the mound, there stands a gurdwara, known as Damdama. It was here that a local chieftain, Raja Ram, came to seek blessings for a son. His wish was fulfilled and, according to Sikh sources, the Raja's son, Ratan Rai, became a follower and visited Anandpur Sahib with presents in Sri Guru Gobind Singh's time.

While in Assam, the Guru also visited Cooch Behar, Chander Bhanga, Kisen Ganj and Purnea. The Guru left Assam early in the year 1670 CE. The Guru took a route different from the one he had travelled during his onward journey. He travelled in the direction of Patna via Bongaigaon, Siliguri and Katihar, revisiting places like Sasaram and Benares. There is still in Sasaram a place called Bagh Guruji.[44]

The Guru was in haste to reach Punjab. The reason was that during this period, there was a marked change in the socio-religious policy of Aurangzeb who adopted a totally uncompromising attitude towards the Hindus. On April 8, 1669 CE, the emperor, according to the *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri*, issued orders to all the governors of the provinces "to destroy with a violent hand the schools and temples of the infidels," and they were strictly "enjoined to put an entire stop to the teaching and practice of idolatrous forms of worship."

The Guru did not pay a visit to Patna for the obvious reason that he wanted to avoid delay. Instead, he sent Bhai Mati Das and his brother-in-law Kirpal Chand, to take the family straight to Lakhnaur via Ayodhya, Lucknow, Nanakmatta and Hardwar, while he would join them at Lakhnaur after having seen Rani Pushpa Devi, mother of Raja Ram Singh, at Delhi.

Obeying the behest of the Master, everybody, including the child Gobind Rai, left for Lakhnaur, and they arrived there on September 13, 1670 CE (*Asu Sudi* 9, 1727 BK).[45] The Guru reached Delhi on June 20, 1670 CE (*Harh* 22, 1727 BK) via Jaunpur, Ayodhya, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, and Muradabad.[46] At Delhi the Guru was waited upon by Rani Pushpa Devi and her daughter-in-law (wife of Raja Ram Singh) who paid their obeisance. The Guru informed them that Raja Ram Singh was successful in his mission and would return shortly. Soon after, the Guru reached Chak Nanaki.

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Tour of cis-Satluj Areas — Malwa and Bangar

According to *Sakhi Pothi*, the Guru spent nearly a year and a half on the tour of the cis-Satluj areas. At Saifabad, the Guru stayed for about four months to honour the wishes of the chief of the place, Nawab Saif Khan. At Mulowal the Guru made arrangements for the supply of potable water by getting sunk nine wells.[47] At Hadiya, the Guru was accorded a hearty welcome. During his stay there, the Guru found that the village was in the grip of a terrible epidemic. They were asked to take a dip in the small pond which had some medicinal qualities to cure the disease. Subsequently, the Guru helped the people in deepening and widening the pond, which has now become the holy tank of Gurusar where every year a big fair is held.[48] The people of Dhilwan received the Guru with great reverence.[49] The Guru liked the place and stayed there for several months, and as the tradition goes, the Guru made arrangements for the supply of 101 cows to the people to enable them to alleviate shortage of milk. In the villages of Dikhi, Ali Sher, and Bhupali, the local *panchayats* and those of neighbouring villages accorded hearty welcome to the Guru and made offerings to him. One of the persons who came to pay homage to the Guru was Chaudhari Jagraj with whom the Guru was specially pleased and whom the Guru asked to found a new village on a particular mound.[50] After Bhupali, the Guru camped at Khiva.[51] A person named Singha served the Guru with such devotion that the Guru blessed him. His fellow villagers in token of the appreciation of his service to the Guru doubled his share in the customary distributary of the village community.

The next important place of sojourn was Samaon.[52] It was here that the Guru was informed of the arrival of the Sikh *sangat* from Kabul. In honour of the visit of the *sangat*, a special *divan* was held, where they offered the Guru precious presents. The meeting of the *sangat* and the Guru was so soul-stirring that a peasant who was working in his field nearby was deeply moved and he could find satisfaction only in offering all his cooked food, which he had just received from home, to the Guru and the Sikh *sangat*. At the village Bhikhi, a local *zamindar*, Des Raj (Desu), waited upon the Guru. The Guru advised him to remove the insignia of Sakhi Sarvar from his neck and he at once obeyed the Master.[53]

The Khayale and Maur villages were the next places of visit. The people of both the villages gave warm reception to the Guru. At a small distance from Maur at a place now called Tahli Sahib, a huge function is organised in celebration of the Sikh Guru's anniversary.[54]

The next stoppage of the Guru was at Talwandi, now known as Damdama Sahib.[55] The Guru was attended to by a large number of people. The Guru stated that the place would become a great religious centre in due course of time.

From Talwandi, the Guru reached Bhatinda. The Guru stayed here for nine days during which he enjoyed hunting in the nearby forest. From Bhatinda, the Guru marched to a place now called Sulisar where a few thieves made an abortive attempt to steal horses.

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The next important places the Guru visited were Bara[56] and Bachhona.[57] At the former place the Guru stayed for the whole of the rainy season. The people of the village served the Guru with devotion. They placed a number of their fields at the disposal of the Guru, for the supply of green fodder to the animals in the Guru's camp. At Bachhona too the Ranghar inhabitants spared no pains to make the Guru's stay comfortable. A most significant feature of the *Sakhi Pothi* accounts pertaining to the place is the reference to the vast number of people attending upon the Guru during the journey. From Bachhona, the Guru proceeded to Gobindpura,[58] and after a short stay moved on to Gaga, Gurne and Makror. The Ranghars of Gaga misbehaved with the Sikhs, but they soon regretted and sought the Guru's pardon.

Now the Guru entered Bangar, the area he had previously toured, and did, therefore, not face much difficulty while threading his way through this region. The most important place visited by the Guru in this part of the country was Dhamdhan, and he must have stayed here for a fairly long time. The Guru did his best to minimise the sufferings of the people of this area. He got many wells sunk, which were a boon to the people of this parched region. The Guru attracted large crowds, who began to look upon the Guru as their saviour and emancipator.

During all his travels, the Guru identified himself with the people in their sorrow and sufferings, and he did whatever he could to provide relief to them. He felt that only those minds which are strong in moral fervour and spirit, are capable of struggling against tyranny and injustice. Accordingly, the Guru exhorted the people to imbibe spiritual and ethical values, sink differences on the basis of caste or birth, give up all fear and face tyranny with resolute calmness. The Guru was propagating the Sikh principle of 'fear not, frighten not'.

The results of these travels were quite encouraging. The internal organisation of the Sikhs, which for some time past had been suffering deterioration, improved considerably in terms of cohesion and preaching activities. Many new *sangats* were established in the Punjab as well as outside, notably Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh. Many old *sangats* were activated. Whether they were new or old, they were all woven into a network to operate as per the instructions of the Guru, which they received either directly or through devoted Sikhs. They all shot into prominence by virtue of their dedication to Sikhism. Similarly, some of the Sikhs were identified and specially asked to spread the message of the Guru far and wide. Bhai Dayal Das was made in charge of the *sangats* at Benares, Mirzapur, and Patna. Bhai Bath was deputed to take care of the *sangat* at Pak Pattan. Many eminent Sikhs such as Jawahri Kalayan Das, Bhai Chand Singh, Rama, Jadho, *et al* were specially identified to bear the torch of Sikh religion. The Guru was a great organiser, and it was mainly due to his efforts that the network of relations with and between the divergent Sikh *sangats* functioned smoothly. These organisations were grouped area-wise with devoted and able co-ordinators in charge of each of these groups. The Guru being at the centre of the entire complex, maintained his links with them through the co-ordinators by means of personal correspondence. The financial requirements of the central headquarters of Sikhism were met through

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voluntary offerings made by Sikh devotees.

One thing worth noticing all through his travels is his avoidance of *masands* and his attempts to build direct relationship between himself and the Sikhs.

From the foregoing account of the travels of the Guru, some important inferences can be drawn. First, the Guru's long journeys in the north-east, Malwa, and Bangar, were a great success and left a deep impact on the people. Secondly, the Guru took care to make personal contacts with the *panchayats*, *chaudhris* and the elders of different villages. Thirdly, he organised big functions to bring together people from far and near to discuss problems of common interest from a common platform. Fourthly, he established centres of Sikhism at various places to lend continuity to his mission. During the greater part of his travels, the Guru moved with a large following and received the homage of the people by way of offerings. This was particularly true during the later phase of his travels. This caused misgivings and panic among the official circles, and the local news reporters made exaggerated and distorted reports to the government regarding the movements and activities of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur.

As regards the duration of the tour, nothing definite can be said. Probably the tour lasted for a year and a half. It appears that the start was made about the middle of 1673 CE and it was not till the end of 1674 CE or the beginning of 1675 CE that the Guru with his large retinue returned home.

Martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom did not take place suddenly. It was, in fact, the result of the conflict that lay at the root of the conceptual framework and operational activities of the Sunni section of the Musilms and those of the Sikh Gurus. Besides this the hypersensitivity, which was partly the product of over-zealousness for the implementation of the Sunni policies, and partly the psychological hurt caused by the emperor's inability to prop up the tottering *jagirdari*-based polity. However, to be clear about the factors which were responsible for the execution of the Guru, we will have to carefully examine all relevant facts.

Aurangzeb, after ascending the throne, hastened to convince the orthodox Muslims in the empire of their having backed the right horse. He began with puritanic measures. In the second year of his reign he discontinued the celebration of *Naurauz* (first day of the Solar year). A few years later, music and dancing were prohibited. *Jharokha Darshan* was discontinued on the ground that it smacked of human worship. Severe punishments were awarded for anything that was construed by the theologians as violating the spirit and even letter of Islam. Permissible length of the beard was fixed at four fingers and offenders against this order were penalized.

But most of these restrictions were of a general nature and covered all communities. Non-Muslims were singled out for discriminatory treatment in four specified fields, viz., public services, construction and repair of temples, conversion and taxation. Regarding the discrimination of the government towards the Hindus in services, the remarks of Shri Ram Sharma are pertinent. He says that towards the end of Aurangzeb's

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reign there was a smaller number of Hindus occupying the *mansabs* of 1000 and above than the number of similar *mansabdars* towards the end of Shahjahan's reign. But the decrease in number becomes still more significant when we take into account the increase in the total number of *mansabdars* which rose substantially in the reign of Aurangzeb. In 1657 CE under Shahjahan there were 8000 *mansabdars* in all, whereas in 1690 CE the number of *mansabdars* had risen to 14556.....the percentage of the Hindus in the higher ranks of the state services could not have been more than 50 per cent of what it was towards the end of Shahjahan's reign."

Besides this, a carefully planned attack was launched prohibiting the construction and repair of temples. Even before Aurangzeb, in the reign of Jehangir and Shahjahan, there were several instances of destruction of temples, but then these occurrences were generally part of military operations. In 1659 CE, the year of his coronation, Aurangzeb ordered that "no new temple should be allowed to be built although it was decided 'according to our common law' the standing temples should not be demolished."

The emperor became more and more aggressive with the passage of time. In 1666 CE, the stone railing of the famous Keshav Rai temple of Mathura was razed to the ground by imperial orders. In April, 1669 CE, he issued a general order for the destruction of all schools and temples of Hindus. "Orders were now sent to the governors of all provinces that they should destroy the schools and temples of the infidels and put an end to their educational activities as well as the practices of religion of *Kafirs*."[59] It was followed by the demolition of the temples on a large scale. In August 1669 CE, the temple of Vishwanath at Benares was demolished. The temple of Gopinath, in Benares, too, was destroyed about the same time. An attempt was also made to destroy the Shiva temple of Janganwari in Benares, but the idea was somehow given up for some time. Similar destruction was ordered in the various Rajput States, Ujjain, Ajmer, Bengal and other provinces of the Empire.

Lest the order should go amiss, strict administrative measures were taken. He appointed officers in all the subdivisions and the cities of the Empire to enforce the regulations of Islam with the destruction of Hindu places of worship as one of their chief duties. The *qazis* were actively associated with the new policy.[60] The officers were told that reports of destruction of temples would be looked upon as authentic only if they bore their seal and attestation.[61]

Like other non-Muslims, the Sikhs too, according to Khafi Khan in *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*, came in for their share of tyranny. Their gurdwaras were being destroyed and their leaders externed. Mirza Inayatullah Ismi tells us in *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri* that in compliance with the orders of the emperor and with the consent of the local *qazi* the Sikh temple in the town of Buriya in the *pargana* of Khizarabad of the *sarkar* of Sirhind had been demolished and a mosque had been raised on the site.[62] Sayyid Zafar Darvesh was appointed in charge of that mosque to guide prayers and benedictions. Some Sikhs attacked the mosque and killed the *darvesh*. The emperor rebuked the *qazi* and his father who was the head of the police. In fact, this sort of incidents had become a common occurrence.[63]

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In the field of taxation, the policy of discrimination was launched with great vigour. *Jaziya* and pilgrimage taxes were relevied. Custom duties on the Muslims were fixed at 2.5% and the Hindus at 5% on the price of their cattle.[64]

The role of *zamindars* was significant. These people were different from *jagirdars*. The *jagirdars* were appointed by the imperial orders, but the *zamindars* by custom had emerged as the leaders of villages, and had small armies of their own. Moreover, the *zamindars*, unlike *jagirdars*, were often the leaders of caste or tribal groups, and as such, they wielded considerable influence. Not unoften, their influence was utilized for the collection of the revenue, but with the lapse of time and especially during Aurangzeb's reign when the seams appeared in the agrarian structure, the *zamindars* gained in stature and reputation, with the result that the government and *jagirdars* began to apprehend danger that they might defy their authority. The *zamindars*, on their part, were fully aware of the predicament the authorities were faced with as also the psychosis of the men in power. They spared no pains to pose themselves, as the protectors and defenders of the peasants against official tyranny. According to Irfan Habib, "As the number of stirrings of homeless peasants grew and peasants took to arms themselves, it became possible for the *zamindars* to organise them into a still larger band or army for dismantling the Mughal Empire and expanding their chiefships."[65]

The government committed to the Sunni views of Islam and determined to perpetuate tottering *jagirdari*-based economic structure even in the face of serious contradictions, could illbrook Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, who was committed to refashion the society on Sikh principles and whose followers were largely the peasants and in some cases discontented *zamindars*. In his thinking, the emperor was continuously buttressed and prompted by the Naqshbandis, especially their head, Sheikh Saif-ud-din (born around 1639 CE), who had been Aurangzeb's guide and preceptor.

Recently scholars like Athar Ali have tried to prove that Aurangzeb's religious policy was motivated by certain political imperatives; it did not spring out of his religious convictions. He says : "Aurangzeb having killed his brothers and imprisoned his father, justified the seizure of the throne on the ground that he was more competent than his father. This he tried to prove through military successes but in or about 1666 CE, it was clear that the reckless policy of expansion begun in 1659 CE had proved to be a complete failure. A new post-facto justification had to be found for his crime of 1658-59 CE." And this justification was provided by an emphasis on the Islamic character of the Empire apart from the desire to resume his prestige on a new basis. Other issues were also involved which impelled the emperor to pursue the discriminatory policy in religious sphere. This policy was pursued to overcome many difficulties. So long as the empire was expanding, the nobility, as a whole, could satisfy its ambition by looking forward. Once, however, it became clear, as it did in 1667 CE, that any rapid expansion was not to be expected, the urge for promotions among the *mansabdars* could not be easily satisfied. In such a situation, it must have been tempting for the emperor to enlarge the avenues of income for them and gratify the nobility by progressively ousting the Hindus, including Rajputs, from the *jagirs*.[66]

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The ideas of the Gurus held great attraction for the Hindu trading class which found in them an adequate answer to the Brahminical exclusiveness and rigidity as well as a catholicity of outlook which could enable it to build up harmonious relations with the Muslim rulers in the interest of their economic benefit. These ideas also presented opportunities to the lower classes, like Jats, to improve their social status. The result was that the Sikh movement grew rapidly in both numbers and resources. The growing popularity of the movement alarmed both the Muslim rulers and the orthodox Brahmins. The former being of the ruling community, their hostility mattered most. The Mughal government, prompted by the Muslim orthodox section, began to view the Sikh movement with deep suspicion.

The martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, on the one hand, and the hostility of the government towards the Sikhs on the other, posed formidable challenge to the Sikhs. Sri Guru Hargobind handled this situation in the manner of a hero determined to hold aloft the banner of *dharam*. His war with the Mughals was in the true spirit of *dharamyudh*. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur denounced it in the true spirit of *dharamyudh* tradition set by his illustrious predecessors. In *Bachittar Natak* the *dharam* character of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom has been beautifully depicted :

> "The Lord (Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur) protected their paste mark and
> sacred thread.
> And performed a mighty deed in the Kali age.
> To protect the good he spared no pains.
> Gave his head but uttered not a groan,
> For the protection of righteousness he did his noble deed,
> Gave his head but not his creed."[67]

In view of this, it is wrong to presume that the Guru courted martyrdom in order to protect the Hindu religion alone. The special mention of *janéoo* and *tilak*, the distinguishing marks of the Hindus, has been made only to highlight the point that the Hindus were the main target of the tyranny of the government, and in no case can the conclusion be drawn that the Guru's main or sole objective was to protect the Hindu religion.

In fact Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's struggle was against *adharam*, the greatest epitome of which was Aurangzeb, and the Sunni character of his government. To achieve his purpose the Guru propagated his mission among the people. During his tour in the eastern parts of the country, in the Bangar and in the Malwa region of the Punjab, the Guru's message brought new awakening among the people who began to rally round the Guru. The conceptual framework and mode of winning people was sharply different from that of Aurangzeb. The clash was inherent in the situation.

But how did the matter come to a head ? Knowing the mind and the official orders of Emperor Aurangzeb, the imperial intelligencers had been closely watching the movements and activities of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur since his return to Punjab. The Sikh movement, as history records, had been looked upon with suspicion and fear ever since the accession of Emperor Jehangir to the Mughal throne. It is well

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known that the emperor's attitude towards the leaders of non-Muslim faiths, especially after 1669 CE, became very hostile. The royal intelligencers and news reporters interpreted the large gatherings and money offerings at the congregations of the Guru as a dangerous augmentation to his influence and resources like those of Hafiz Adam of Banur — a religious leader of the Pathans, whom Emperor Shahjahan had banished from India in 1632 CE on account of such activities.

How far misrepresentation could go, may be seen from what the author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, Ghulam Hussain, has written on the subject : "This man (Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur) finding himself at the head of so many thousands of people became aspiring and he united his concerns with one Hafiz Adam,[68] a Mohammedan *faqir*. These two men no sooner saw themselves followed by multitudes implicitly addicted to their chief's will than ..... they fell to subsisting by means of coercion and extortion, laying waste the whole province of the Punjab."[69]

It has also been alleged by some scholars that "the Guru encouraged the refractory elements of the country to enter his service, and prepared the people in general for a rising against the government. But before anything substantial could be achieved, he was taken captive and brought to Delhi under military escort." This view has been rejected on many counts. Macauliffe, I.B. Banerjee and many other scholars have said that the Guru being just a *tyagi* (renunciant), a lover of meditation and solitude, could not have done all this. It is difficult to agree with their approach as it ignores the heroic and warrior aspect of the Guru's personality. In fact, the Guru was a supreme embodiment of both *bhagti* and *shakti* in the manner of his predecessors.

The most effective manner of repudiating the views of Ghulam Hussain is on the basis of historical facts and the tenor of *dharam* ideology of the Guru. The statement of Ghulam Hussain suffers from serious factual inaccuracies. The Guru could not have made common cause with Adam, because the *faqir* had since long left India for Medina and passed away (1642 CE). The Guru even on his own did not raise any special army to come into clash with the Mughal government.

In fact, the Guru had neither the intention nor the means of leading any insurrection against Emperor Aurangzeb. The author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin* obliquely refers to this part : "The companions of Tegh Bahadur moved about like mendicants. The wearing of swords and arms was not customary among them." And the rebellion could not be expected to succeed against the great Mughal Empire without a strong trained army equipped with necessary arms. Coercion and extortion as a means of resistance were not resorted to as these do not fit in the *dharam* ideology of the Guru; in fact, voluntary offerings to the Guru were wrongly reported as forcible collections.

Kashmiri Pandits

On May 25, 1675 CE, a deputation of sixteen Brahmins, headed by Kirpa Ram, son of Arhu Ram, reached Anandpur Sahib.[70] They waited upon the Guru and told him how keen Aurangzeb was to convert the land of Kashmir into the land of Muslims, and in obedience of the *furman* of Aurangzeb how cruelly Iftikhar Khan, the governor

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of Kashmir, was implementing the policy of the Mughal emperor.

As the tradition goes, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, on hearing the heart-rending plaints of the Kashmiri *pandits*, was deeply absorbed in thought. Suddenly, the young Gobind Rai entered the *darbar* and was astonished at the prevalence of silence in the assembly. After a brief pause, he quietly enquired of his father the cause of the silence. The Guru explained to young Gobind the predicament of the hapless *pandits*, and significantly remarked that the only way to save them was the supreme sacrifice of some notable saint. Instantaneously, fearless Gobind replied that nobody could be worthier than his revered father. The Guru appreciated the bold and courageous reply of his son and forthwith decided to offer himself for the sacrifice. He told the Brahmins to go to their homes and tell the authorities that they would have no objection to changing their religion if Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was first prevailed upon to embrace Islam.

From this, some historians conclude that the Guru made up his mind to court martyrdom for the Hindu religion alone. The protagonists of this view quote Sri Guru Gobind Singh in their support : "Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur did a miracle in the Kali age by protecting the frontal mark and sacred thread of the Hindus." But this view is only partially true. To regard the appeal of the Brahmins as the sole cause of the Guru's execution is to misjudge the real cause of the Guru's execution as also to circumscribe the scope of the *dharamyudh* ideology. The heart of the matter is that the advice of the Guru to the Kashmiri Brahmins brought the matter to the fore. The process of spreading Sunni ideas and converting people to it, particularly in the places contiguous to the north-western frontier and Punjab, where the orthodox section of the Muslims was the strongest, received a severe setback at the hands of the Guru.

The emperor's intelligencers regularly reported these tidings to him. Busy as he was in quelling the Pathan rebellion in the north-western frontier, he had neither the time nor perhaps the inclination to make extensive enquiries about the activities of the Guru.[71] He was, however, suspicious of the Sikh movement, about which his grandfather, Emperor Jehangir, wished "to put down the teachings and public practice of the religion of these mis-believers." He, therefore, readily believed all the reports of his informers and wrote to the governor of Lahore to arrest Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and ordered that he might be fettered and detained in prison.[72] The Lahore governor passed on the imperial order for compliance to Dilawar Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind, who in turn asked the Kotwal of Ropar, Nur Muhammad Khan Mirza, in whose police jurisdiction lay Anandpur Sahib, to arrest the Guru. The order, however, was kept secret.[73]

The Guru, apprehending such a happening, conferred guruship on his son on July 8, 1675 CE. According to *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind* and *Guru kian Sakhian* the Guru performed the installation ceremony by offering the usual marks of guruship — *Pothi Sahib*, 5 pice and one coconut. Having done this, the Guru left Chak Nanaki on 10th / 11th July, 1675 CE. He was accompanied by Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dyal Das.

As the Guru arrived at Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar on his way to cross the

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Satluj for his onward journey, he was arrested by Mirza Nur Muhammad Khan, the Kotwal of Ropar, on July 12, 1675 CE (*Sawan* 12, 1732 BK) and sent to the *faujdar's* headquarters at Sirhind, where he was imprisoned.

The Guru was kept in prison for about four months by *faujdar* Dilawar Khan, waiting for further orders from the emperor, who was at Hasan Abdal at that time or from the governor at Delhi.[74] According to Sarup Singh, the author of *Guru kian Sakhian* (*Sakhi* no.29), Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was taken to Delhi in an iron cage on receipt of a *parwana* from the Imperial headquarters. The Guru reached Delhi on *Maghar Vadi*, 1732 BK. The Guru was kept in the Kotwali of the city under the instructions of the *subedar* of Shahjahanabad who had acted as per instructions from Aurangzeb, still camping at Hasan Abdal.[75]

During the eight days in Delhi Kotwali, different types of tortures were inflicted on the Guru. On Thursday, the first day of the Guru's arrival, Qazi Abdal Waab Vora offered the Guru three alternatives, viz., (i) to show miracles, or (ii) to embrace Islam, or (iii) to prepare himself for death. He refused to show miracles, it being contrary to the Sikh principles. He also refused to embrace Islam. He chose the last alternative. On Friday and Saturday attempts were made to persuade the Guru to agree to one of the first two alternatives. Thursday the November 11, 1676 CE, was the fateful day. The Guru's three devoted disciples and companions Mati Das, Dayal Das and Sati Das were tortured to death. Bhai Mati Das was tied to two poles and sawn alive, Bhai Dayal Das was boiled alive in a cauldron of hot water, and Sati Das was roasted alive wrapped in cotton wool. This did not shake the Guru.[76]

When the authorities saw that the Guru was firm in his resolve, they ordered the executioner Jalal-ud-Din of Samana to put the Guru to death. According to Muhammad Ahsan Ijad, "When brought to the court (at Delhi), he (Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur) refused to become a Muhammadan and was executed." In the words of the contemporary scholar, Munshi Sujan Rai Bhandari of Batala : "Within twenty two years of the great event, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, having been kept in prison by the *amirs* of the kingdom, was executed under the orders of the Emperor Alamgir in 1086, (al-Hijri, corresponding to the 27th Alamgiri — November 11, 1675 CE)."[77] The Guru allowed himself to be beheaded without uttering a groan. He remained composed in the face of the executioner's blow. His was no stoic fortitude but a decided gesture to force a moral issue. It was a firm and positive decision to confront the situation.

As per order of the government the Guru's body was to be quartered and exposed to public view, obviously to impart stern warning to all such people as dared to go against the wishes and orders of the emperor. But because of prompt and timely action of Sikhs, this could not be done.

According to *Bansawali Nama*, a violent storm rose immediately after this brutal act. In the confusion caused by it, a man named Jaita, resident of Dilli Gate Delhi, dashed out of the crowd and instantaneously disappeared with the head of the Guru. He shared his secret with his neighbour Bhai Nanu. Bhai Uda, the resident of Ladwa, was also taken into confidence. All three decided to take the Guru's head to Anandpur

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Sahib.[78] They placed the head in a basket which was covered over carefully and started their journey to Anandpur Sahib. They made five halts on the way. Their first halt was at Bagpat, the second at Karnal, the third at Anaj Mandi, Ambala, the fourth at Nabha Sahib (near Chandigarh) and the fifth at Kiratpur. They left Delhi early in the morning of the November 13 and reached Kiratpur on the November 15, 1675 CE. From there the head was taken to Anandpur Sahib with full honours and cremated there with proper ceremonies on the November 16, 1675 CE. Gurdwara Sis Ganj marks the place where the hallowed head was cremated. Sri Guru Gobind Singh performed the obsequies with dignity and reverence.

When Lakhi Shah Lubana, who was a famous contractor of Delhi and had deep faith in the Guru, was informed of the martyrdom of the Guru by Uda Singh, he felt much concerned. Bhai Uda and Lakhi Shah made a plan to get hold of the Guru's body. Lakhi Shah, being a renowned contractor, was well known among Muslim officials and did not arouse suspicion of any kind. He emptied his carts laden with lime near the Red fort and returned to his home in village Rakabganj.

On the way, taking advantage of the darkness and carelessness of the Mughal guards, Lakhi Shah, helped by his sons, Nagahiya, Hema and Harhi, and Dhuma son of Kanha, whisked away the body of the Guru on *Maghar Sudi* 6, 1732 BK (November 12, 1675 CE) in one of their carts to their home.

Apprehensive of the governmental reprisal, Lakhi Shah and his sons then built up a pyre inside their house and set fire to it the same evening.[79] A little after dark, it is said, that a police party did arrive at the scene in search of the body, but finding the house in flames and the inmates weeping bitterly, returned. After the cremation was over, the ashes were collected and put in a metal vessel called *gagar* and buried on the spot.

Lakhi Shah, with a few other Sikhs, reached Anandpur Sahib. Sri Guru Gobind Singh received them with honour and as says *Guru kian Sakhian*, he hugged Lakhi Shah. Lakhi Shah narrated the tragic events. The entire *sangat* was overwhelmed while Sri Guru Gobind Singh comforted the Sikhs and bade them not to give way to grief.

Significance of Martyrdom

The ninth Nanak's martyrdom had far-reaching consequences. The Guru's purpose was to instil among the aggrieved the spirit of manliness to rise against their oppressors. No doubt, no immediate success was possible, but the heroic manner in which the Guru sacrificed his life blazed a new trail in the annals of Sikhism. It was a commitment to an open struggle against the organised oppression of the state. The organisation of the Sikhs underwent a mighty transformation. The idea of *dharamyudh*, which was so far implicit, came into prominence and a complete concept of struggle was evolved with a view to explaining its aims and boosting the morale of the participants.

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom marks the highest watermark of resolution to suffer for one's lofty ideals. It exposed the barbarous character of the Sunni state headed by the Sunni Mohammedans. The Guru's sacrifice rudely shook and inflamed

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all right-thinking people. The most daring demonstraion of this effect was an attack on Aurangzeb himself. "On Friday, October 27, 1676 CE, while the emperor was returning from Jama Masjid and had alighted from the boat in order to mount the mobile throne (*takht-i-rawan*), an ill-fated disciple of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh (sic), threw two bricks, one of which reached the throne. He was seized by the retinue and ordered to be made over to Kotwal."[80] Sikhism became the symbol of resistance. With Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, it acquired a new conciousness of its strength and self-reliance.

Regarding the true nature of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's struggle, different opinions have been expressed. But before drawing any conclusion, it would be advisable to discuss all the questions connected with the struggle. Was it for the protection of religion ? If so, which religion — the Hindu or the Sikh or religion in general ? Could the struggle be viewed as one for the protection of civil rights like freedom of conscience, or as one for the freedom of the country from a foreign yoke ? Was there any political motive involved in it ?

No communal considerations seem to have weighed with the Guru in his struggle. The fact that many important Muslims suffered executions at the hands of the Mughal emperor and many Muslims such as Saif Khan offered support to the Guru in his mission, shows that the struggle was not confined to the non-Muslims alone. The ordinary Musalman was also not happy. It is true that he had no religious difficulties like those of non-Muslims, but socially, politically and economically, his lot was no better than those of the Hindus and the Sikhs. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur seems to have been quite aware of this fact. Therefore, it would be a rather narrow view, if it is argued, as is often done, that the Guru's struggle was inspired only by the desire to protect the Hindu religion. That such a thing was not absent from his mind may be conceded, because reference to this effect has been made in *Bachittar Natak*. But whether that was the sole aim of the Guru is open to question. Lest the reference to *tilak* and *janéoo* should be taken in a narrow sense, it has been added at the same place that the sacrifice was for *dharam*. Here the significance lies in the absence of any prefix Hindu or Sikh. The Guru's lofty object of building up a popular resistance to the tyranny of the government automatically covered the protection of Hindu religion or even Sikh religion, which, too, had been dealt with severely. Moreover, *dharam* in the context of our culture covers almost every aspect of life where the principle of justice or righteousness is involved. Anything done for a noble or righteous cause is something done for *dharam*. So when we say that the struggle of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was for *dharam*, it does not mean a struggle for any particular religion, much less a struggle for Hindu or Sikh religion alone. It was called so because the cause, which involved in it the fight against tyranny, was a noble and righteous cause.

Also, the sacrifice of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was for the protection of civil rights, particularly the freedom of conscience. To a modern mind saturated in consciousness of his rights such a statement would be only right and acceptable; but the consciousness of rights is comparatively a recent development in the world. In

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world civilization till the advent of the Sikhs, emphasis used to be more on duties than rights. And it is this idea which determined our concept of tyranny. Tyranny is not only infringement of rights, but also a departure from duties. The ruler is believed to owe certain duties to his subjects which are the rights of the subjects. If he departs from them, the result is 'tyranny'. It is in this sense that the word tyranny is understood by the Sikhs.

Did Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur have any political objectives ? If inspiring people to resist tyranny is a political object, then the answer is 'yes'. The Guru emphasised the *dharam* character of his approach again and again, when he was charged with breaking laws. His repeated statement that he was a *darvesh*, having nothing to do with the overthrow of the government, brings into relief the same *dharam* aspect. But as it had been made clear earlier, by *dharam* the Guru meant anything done for a noble or righteous cause, and no other cause was as righteous as the resistance to the tyranny of the Mughals. The Guru identified himself with the weak and the oppressed, and attempted to arouse them to a sense of resistance to the tyranny to which they were subjected.

The approach as well as the struggle of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur exactly fits in with the spirit and the general tendency of the Sikh movement in the past. The movement had already committed itself to resistance to all forms of tyranny, including political oppression. What is more, the employment of force for a purpose like this had been recognised as legitimate. Sri Guru Hargobind and Sri Guru Har Rai had maintained troops and encouraged training in the use of weapons. Hence, we can say that the armed struggle of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was a continuation and no distortion of the character of the Sikh movement.

Also the execution of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur not only strengthened the resistance against Aurangzeb's policy, but it also prepared the way for the final stage in the evolution of the Khalsa. The event convinced Sri Guru Gobind Singh that tyranny has numerous layers and in order to end it, an all-out effort would have to be made. He had to forge an instrument to achieve this purpose. With this end in view, he created the Khalsa, a brotherhood of persons committed to end tyranny of any kind by just means.

Vision and Teachings

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur stood for the same system of metaphysical, moral, social and spiritual values as had been underscored by his predecessors. Still, his writings, incorporated in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, have an identity of their own for the manner in which certain elements in the Sikh philosophy are expressed and highlighted.

The Guru composed 59 *padas* and fifty seven *sloks* in all. The *shabads* are distributed over fifteen *raags*. The *sloks* or couplets form the concluding portion of Guru Granth Sahib. As such, these are ceremonially intoned as part of epilogue when concluding an open congregational reading of the scripture on a religious or social occasion and are thus amongst the more familiar hymns of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

From a perusal of his compositions it is not difficult to surmise that the most striking elements were his unflinching faith in God, Omnipotent, Omniscient,

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Omnipresent, most High and most Gracious, the ultimate ground of all that exists, and his desire that people should try to realise Him. The stage of realisation is a stage of perfect peace and happiness. The Guru calls this stage *Nirban Pad*, *Amar Pad*, and *Mukti Pad* in his compositions.

Nirvan / mukti / moksha is a sublime experience of self in perfect communion with God. With this realisation, the seeker of truth not only attains illumination of the highest wisdom, but also complete freedom from fear and mundane authority and identifies himself with all human beings; it is not mere extinction of desire during life and *karma* after death; it is the mysticism of action in which instead of turning inwards, the soul opens its wide gates to universal love.

What exactly causes man's spiritual malaise and bondage ? The Guru clarifies that it is primarily *haumain* that separates man from God and bedims the divine spark within him. This leads to spiritual blindness or nescience, which alienates man from the Universal Will, and he erroneously regards the unreal as real. An ego-centred person is ruled by passion and instincts, and is unable to free himself / herself from the stranglehold of the five impulses — *kam* (carnal lust), *krodh* (anger), *lobh* (avarice), *moh* (attachment) and *ahankar* (pride). Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, in tender melody brings out this point in *Raag Asa* where he says :

Ensnared in greed, the mind drifts and drifts,
Craving more ever more for wealth
In seeking worldly pleasures.
My mind comes to acute grief,
As it slaves before everyone.
Going like a dog from door to door,
Blind to the devotion of God,
Man wastes a precious human life,
He is shamelessly heedless,
Even when people chide.[81]

Equally unavailing is the wearing of ochre robes, a dress cannot be a substitute for enlightenment. The Guru remarks :

Bear this in mind,
Wasted is the life of the man,
Who is devoid of devotion to God.
He who keeps fasts and goes to pilgrimages
And performs acts of piety,
Without purity of mind and self-control
Useless are all his pious acts :
Believe me, I speak the truth.
Place a stone in water,
It remains hard and insensible.
Such is the lot of a man,
Who is devoid of love of God.[82]

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According to Bhat Kalsahar, all the Gurus, right from Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Sri Guru Arjun Dev, had lived the life of *Raj Yogi*. Sri Guru Hargobind underscored this point by wearing two swords representing the *miri* (temporal) and the *piri* (spiritual) aspects of the Guru's office, which are the same as *bhagti* and *shakti*. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, therefore, besides remembrance of God had received military training. After he was elevated to guruship, he travelled widely and in the course of his travels conducted himself in the manner of a chief, fond of horse-riding, wearing arms with a *kalghi* (aigrette) on his turban, followed by a large retinue, just as his warrior father used to do.[83] According to Dr Fauja Singh, *bhagti* was to be continued with *shakti* to offer full view of the Guru's philosophy of life. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's own description of a *gurmukh* is apt and admirable :

He who grieves not in grief,
From avarice, pleasures and fear is free,
And considers gold as good as dust, who indulges not in slander or flattery,
And is immune to greed, attachment and vanity
Who in happiness and sorrow, self-poised remains,
And is immune to greed, attachment and vanity,
Who discards all hopes and desires
Who lives detached from the world
And is not affected by lust and wrath.
In such a one shines the Light of God
The man who receives the Guru's grace,
Discovers the secret of spiritual life,
Sayeth Nanak, the soul of such a man blends,
With God, as water mingles with water.[84]

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. Bhai Mehra was a devout Sikh of Sri Guru Hargobind.
2. Trilochan Singh : *Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur*, Delhi, 1967, pp. 94-5.
3. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : *Guru kian Sakhian*, ed. Piara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, *Sakhi* no. 14.
4. *Bhat Vahi Talaunda*, MS., Punjabi University, Patiala.
5. According to *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and his family were present at Paryag on the full moon day of *Vaisakhi*, 1719 BK. (April 19, 1661 CE).
6. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, *Khata Barhtion ka.*
7. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, and *Guru kian Sakhian.*
8. Till the discovery of *Bhat Vahis*, it was generally thought that Guru Harkrishan made only a vague hint regarding the succession of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur.
9. Koer Singh : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, reprint, Punjabi University, 1968, p. 22. According to the author many pretentious guruships were set up.
10. Sukha Singh : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin* :

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Agon sunian bai manjian; Guru ban baithé han bahutéré.
Sarab Guru nij ko kehvai; bai baithé thé manjian lai.
Sikh sakha jé ko avai; bai thavar su bhét chadhavai.
Also, see Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : *Bansawali Nama.*
According to Giani Gian Singh, out of 22 impostors, 11 belonged to Sodhi families of Lahore, Amritsar and Kiratpur. The other ten were well-known Sodhis. See, Gian Singh, Giani : *Panth Parkash*, p 110, litho copy.

11. Trilochan Singh : op. cit., p. 121.
12. *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind.* Also, Kaushish, Sarup Singh : *Guru kian Sakhian, Sakhi* 19, 20.
13. Ibid.
14. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi.* Also, see *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind*, MS., Department of Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.
15. According to Sarup Singh Kaushish, Makhan Shah, along with his son Lal Das and his wife, visited Bakala in 1721 BK, on the Diwali day (See Kaushish, Sarup Singh : *Guru kian Sakhian*). Also refer to *Bhat Vahi Tomar Binjlauton ki.*
16. Karam Singh Historian says that *Labanas* were never traders or *vanjaras.* From the negative argument that Makhan Shah was not a trader, Karam Singh draws another conclusion that Makhan Shah must have been a *masand* who had brought the *daswandh* of the *sangat* under his charge on the *Vaisakhi* day as it was the custom then obtaining among the *masands* to do so either on the *Vaisakhi* day or *Diwali* day. According to Dr Trilochan Singh, had Makhan Shah been a *masand* of Gujarat, he would have certainly waited till the dispute was settled. Sewa Das in his *Parchian* calls him both a *Labana* trader and a *masand.* Garja Singh in *Shaheed Bilas* by Sewa Singh calls him 'a trader' having deep faith in Sikhism.
17. Makhan Shah vowed to donate 500 *dinars. Guru kian Sakhian* mentions only 101 gold *mohars. Bhat Vahi Tomar Binjlauton ki* gives same figure. We, however, attach more weight to the evidence of *Bhat Vahis* because firstly these are the earliest available record and secondly the *Bhats* were the persons who had the intimate knowledge of the Sikhs and their history.
18. *Bhat Vahi Khata Binjlauton ka, Makhan Shah béta Dasé ka pota Arthé ka ..... Lal Chand Makhan Shah ka Chandu Lal Makhan Shah ka Solji istri Makhan Shah ki ..... Salsat Rai ikis ki Diwali Shanivar ké dihon Bakala gaon may aya. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehal Namé ké Darbar Ikotar Sau Muhar Bhéta ki, Séth Dhuma Nai aaya béta Kahné binjlaut ka.*
19. Macauliffe, M.A. : *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 334. Diwan Durgah Mal requested the Guru that he being too old to carry the heavy responsibilities of the post be relieved, and in his place his nephews Mati Das and Sati Das maybe appointed as *diwan* and minister of *darbar.* He further recommended the appointment of Dayal Das, son of Bhai Bulla who fell martyr in Sri Sri Sri Guru Hargobind's battle of Amritsar, as the household minister.
20. According to *Suraj Parkash*, Dhir Mal was attacked before he left for Kartarpur. According to Giani Gian Singh, he had already left for Kartarpur and was overtaken by hot chase.
21. Trilochan Singh : op. cit., p. 168. *Guru Bansawali* and the writings of Harji Mina and Meharban clearly indicate that they had a complete control over the Harmandir.
22. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni Khata Jalhana ka*, MS., Punjabi University, Patiala.
23. According to Kesar Singh Chhibbar and a few other near contemporary records, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur bought three villages, viz., Makhowal, Mathur and Lodhipur, originally founded by two Pathan brothers, Makhé Khan and Katé Khan, in local tradition. The Guru selected Makhowal village for gurdwara, that is, his residence. It was named Nanaki Chak — the name which has come down in the revenue records. According to Sarup Singh in *Guru kian Sakhian*, the Guru

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founded Chak Nanaki on *Harh* 21, 1722 BK.

24. The statement of *Bhat Vahi* is not clear regarding this point. It may even mean free gift. The general view, however, is that this land was purchased from the *raja* of Bilaspur (Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer, Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhai Sukha Singh, Giani Gian Singh). Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, in their *A Short History of the Sikhs*, page 52, say that Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur paid rupees 500 for it. But they have not given their source of information. Hence, we may conclude that some payment was made though we cannot say what exactly it was.
25. Trilochan Singh : op. cit, p. 178.
26. The place is about half a mile from Punjabi University, Patiala. The place was named so after the name of its founder, Saif Khan. The place is now called Bahadurgarh after the name of the fort which was named after Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur.
27. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., *Sakhi* 20.
28. *Bhat Vahi Jado Bansian Khata Barhtian* :
    "*Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, Mehal Nama..... nagar Dhamdhan pargana Bangar sé Alam Khan Rohilla shahi hukam gail Dilli sé lai kar aaya, saal satrai sai biaasi, Kartik mass shukla pakhé sudi 11 ké dihon sath Sati Das, Mati Das, bété Hira Mal Chhibbar ké, Gwal Das béta Chhotée Mal Chhibbar ka, Gurdas béta Kirat Barhtia ka, Sangat béta Binna Uppal ka, Jétha, Dayal Das, bété Mai Das ké, Jalhana Blaut har Sikh faqir farhé aaé.*"
    The author of *Mehma Parkash* says that the arrests were effected when the Guru in company of many Sikhs was out on a hunting expedition. (See, Bhalla, Sarup Das : *Mehma Parkash*, p. 673, ed. Gobind Singh Lamba.)
29. Bhuyan, S.K. : *Badshah Buranji*, *Sakhi* 116.
30. *Bhat Vahi Jado Bansian Khata Barhtian*, Punjabi University, Patiala.
31. This shrine is known by the name of Chacha Phagu's Sangat.
32. The memory of the Guru's visit is still in the minds of the people and pertaining to that memory legends are still current among them.
33. G.B. Singh : "*Sikh Relics in East Bengal*", article in *The Sikh Review*, July 1965.
34. Natha was the third in succession to Almast.
35. Sylhet provided war elephants to Sri Guru Gobind Singh.
36. Trilochan Singh : op. cit., p. 230.
37. Shah Akbar, Shah Bagmar, Shah Saran, Shah Safi and Shah Kamal.
38. Trilochan Singh : op. cit., p. 230.
    "From a manuscript document in possession of Mahant Bachittar Singh of the gurdwara at Dhubri, it is learnt that Ram Singh counted upon the Guru's ability to undo the effects of the black arts for which Kamrup had a reputation all over India and which in the estimation of the *raja* were sure to be used against himself and his army."
39. Fauja Singh : *Hukamnamas — Sri Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib*, Punjabi University, 1967, *Hukamnama* 15, 16.
40. Gait, E.A. : *History of Assam*, page 155.
41. Bhuyan, S.K. : *Anglo-Assamese Relations.*
42. Contemporary Assamese records too are quite clear about this.
43. Gait, E.A. : op. cit., p. 155.
44. Ved Parkash : *The Sikhs in Bihar*, unpublished doctoral thesis submitted to Patna University.
45. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi Khata Jalhanon Balauton ka.*
46. *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind.*
47. *Sakhi Pothi*, *Sakhi* 2, pp. 5-6.

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48. Ibid., *Sakhi* 5, p. 10.
49. Ibid., *Sakhi* 6, p. 11.
50. Ibid., *Sakhi* 11, p. 14.
51. Ibid., *Sakhi* 13.
52. Ibid., *Sakhi* 14, p. 16.
53. Ibid., *Sakhi* 17, p. 18.
54. Ibid., *Sakhis* 18, 19, 20, pp. 20-22.
    Some of these places such as Maiser Khana, Maur, Talwandi Sabo, etc., were also visited by the Guru on his first visit to Malwa in 1664-65 CE. Reading the various *sakhis* carefully, we find that there were already quite a few Sikhs residing in the area around Talwandi and Maur. The reception given to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and his followers was enthusiastic in the places visited by the Guru after Mulowal.
55. Ibid., *Sakhi* 20, p. 21.
56. Ibid., *Sakhi* 23, p. 24.
57. Ibid., *Sakhi* 25, p. 25.
58. Ibid., *Sakhi* 28, p. 26.
59. *Muraqat-i-Abul Hasan*, p. 202 as cited by Sharma, Sri Ram : *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, New York, 1962, p. 130.
60. Bal, S.S. : "*Awakening the Oppressed — Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's Role and Its Reasons*", article published in *The Sikh Review*, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom Tercentenary number.
61. *Muraqat-i-Abul Hasan*, p. 202, as cited by Sharma, Sri Ram : op. cit.
62. *Kalimat-i-Taiyyabat*, p. 115.
63. Gupta, Hari Ram : "*Rumbling of Imperial Wrath and Back to Makhowal*", article published in *The Sikh Review*, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom Tercentenary number.
64. Fauja Singh : *Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur*, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 54.
65. Habib, Irfan : *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1965, p. 193.
66. Ali, M. Athar : *The Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb*, pp. 98-99.
67. *Bachittar Natak*, authorship disputed, written sometime in the 18th century.
68. Hafiz Adam left Hindostan long before this and had died at Medina in 1643 CE. Therefore, his making a common cause with Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur is factually incorrect.
    For cross-reference see, Deobandi, Nazir Ahmad : *Tazkra-i-Abdin*, pp. 124-25; Akhtar, Mirza Mohammad : *Tazkra-i-Auliya-i-Hind wa Pakistan*, p. 401.
69. *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, English translation by Dr Raymond, p. 85.
70. The information regarding this data is obtained from *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind*, and from *Guru kian Sakhian*, p. 78, *Sakhi* 28.
71. On April 17, 1674 CE, Aurangzeb had to leave Delhi for Hasan Abdal where he reached on June 26, 1674 CE. The emperor aimed at restoring the Imperial writ in the Pathan land from Kandahar to Attock where different tribes had defied the Mughal authority, and had risen in open revolt against it. Aurangzeb stayed there from June 1674 CE, to December 1675 CE.
72. *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*.
73. Irvine : *Later Mughals*, ed. J.N. Sarkar, reprint, Delhi, 1995, Vol. I, p. 79. Ijad, Muhammad Ahsab : *Farukhsiyar Nama*, MS., f. 13 a.
74. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., *Sakhi* 29. According to *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, *Khata Jalhanon Balounton ka*, the period of imprisonment was four months.
75. That the emperor was not physically present at the time of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom has been proved by the positive evidence of *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri* written by Saqi Mastan Khan

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serving in the administration of Aurangzeb. This is the best primary source for the study, other contemporary sources being not very useful as *Alamgir Nama* covers only ten years of the reign of Aurangzeb. *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab* contains no reference to the Guru. *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh* makes a very brief reference to the Guru's martyrdom. *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri* gives the dates on which the emperor left Delhi for Hasan Abdal and returned from there :

i. The emperor started on April 7, 1674 CE, 11 *Muharrami* for Hasan Abdal, on Friday, June 26, he reached Hasan Abdal.

ii. On Thursday, the 23rd of December, 1675 CE, 15th of *Shawaal* began the return journey from Hasan Abdal. The first stage was Kala Begh ... ... The emperor reached the garden of Lahore on Friday, January 21, 1676 CE.

iii. On Thursday, February 24, 1676 CE, the emperor left Lahore ... ... on Monday, March 27, 1676 CE, the emperor arrived at Delhi. (Original text, p. 153, and English translation by J.N. Sarkar, p. 94).

76. The account is based on Sarup Singh Kaushish's *Guru kian Sakhian, Sakhi* 29, p. 30.

77. Bhandari, Sujan Rai : *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh*, written in 1697 CE.

78. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi Khata Udanion ka* :
"Jaita béta Agya ka Nanu béta Baghé ka, Uda béta Khémé ka Guru ka sis lae Kiratpur Pargana Kehlur ayé. Sal sattarae se battis, Mangsar sudi dasmi ké dihon. Giaras ko dag diya, Makhowal mein, agae Guru ki gat Guru janae. Guru aap bhannae ka khabind hai."

79. *Bhat Vahi Jado Bansian Khata Barhtié Kanaunt ka* :
"Lakhiya béta Godhu ka, Nagahiya, Héma, Harhi bété Lakhiya ké Jado Bansi, Barhtiya Kanaunt, Naik Dhuma bété Kanhé ké, Tumar Binjlaunt, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehal Naven ki loth uthae lae. Sal sattarae se battis Mangsar sudi chhat, Guruvar ké dihon dag diya "Rasina" Garh mein adhi raat rehan rahi.

80. *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri*. Eng. trans. by J. N. Sarkar. Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1947. Page, 94.

81. Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Asa*, p. 411.

82. Ibid., *Raag Bilaval*, p. 831.

83. Recently, a painting of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur has been discovered from the Sangat Tola Gurdwara in Dhaka. In this painting, the Guru has been depicted as a warrior with a *kalghi* on the head and a falcon perched on the hand. Besides, there are several references with regard to his hunting expeditions in the course of his travels.

84. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Slok Mahla 9*, pp. 1426-27.

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13

NANAK X — SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH

Early Life

Sri Guru Gobind Singh was a versatile genius. He was "law-giver in the pulpit, champion in the field, king on the *masnad*, and *faqir* in the society of the Khalsa" or a *Badshah Darvesh*, as described by his court poet Bhai Nand Lal :

> "He effectively aroused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty longing for social freedom and national ascendancy. The living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people and the impress of (Guru) Gobind (Singh) has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frame."[1]

In elevating the lowly and downtrodden Sri Guru Gobind Singh did pioneering work long before the birth of Karl Marx and Lenin.

Most authorities agree that the Guru was born on *Poh Sudi* 7, 1723 BK viz., December 22, 1666 CE. This date has been recorded by i) Bhai Kahn Singh in his *Mahan Kosh*, ii) Bhai Sukha Singh in his *Gurbilas*, and iii) Koer Singh in his *Gurbilas*.[2] There are a few writers, however, who believe that the Guru was born on *Poh Sudi* 7, 1718 BK, viz., December 18, 1661 CE. Some of these are Gulab Singh of Nirmala order,[3] Kesar Singh Chhibbar,[4] Sarup Singh Koshish,[5] and Dr Narang[6]. They agree that the Guru was born at Patna. Relying on the *Panda Vahis* and *Bhat Vahis*, they argue that Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur had paid a visit to Patna earlier also in 1961 CE, and that the date of 1661 CE, as the year of birth of the Guru, is more probable.

However, Karam Singh, who was a pioneer in the field of modern Sikh historical research, wrote a monograph, *Gurpurb Nirnay*, in which he has stated that two dates of birth of Sri Guru Gobind Singh had been prevalent, but the more acceptable date is in the year 1666 CE.[7]

Sri Guru Gobind Singh was the only son of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and Mata Gujri. At the time of his birth, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was at Dhaka engaged in missionary and organisational activities. Bhai Dayal Das, the chief of the *sangat* at Patna, immediately despatched a letter to Dhaka giving the happy news which was

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carried posthaste by Bhai Mehar Chand and Bhai Kalyan Chand. There was great rejoicing at Dhaka.[8]

Gobind Das passed his early years at Patna under the care of his mother, grandmother and maternal uncle, Kirpal Chand. Not much is known about the Guru's childhood except that his unassuming yet assertive utterances, his amiable and affectionate manner made him the cynosure of all, particularly Pandit Shiv Dutt,[9] an erudite scholar, and Raja Fateh Chand Maini and his wife Kishori Devi.[10]

As tradition goes, he indulged in child-like pranks like breaking with pellets the earthen pitchers of women, who came to draw water from the well in the compound of his house. He would gather round himself a band of frolicsome playmates, run about on the banks of the placid Ganges, put out boats, splash water, swim, wrestle, box and fight. He would then bring his contingent back home, give them presents and feed them. His mimic battles at the head of his bands evoked memories of Nanaki, his grandmother, of the grand old days of her husband, the sixth Guru, who had challenged the might of the Mughals. To her particularly it looked as if her grandchild was rehearsing the role he might be called upon to play. No constraints were, therefore, applied on him so that he might develop his lithe and lissom without let and hindrance. He often played the commander, and loved bows, arrows, swords, lances, *et al.* His favourite games were mock fights, military exercises and manoeuvres, raising of troops, holding of courts to settle the disputes among his playmates.[11] All what he did, portended a high profile role for him.

In 1670 CE, he left Patna to join his father at Nanaki Chak, a city founded by the ninth Nanak in the Shivalik Hills of Punjab.

He then set out for Nanaki Chak along with his mother, grandmother and Kirpal Chand, besides a number of attendants. *En route* he stayed at Danapur, Kashi, Paryag, Lucknow, Chandausi, Mathura, Brindaban, Hardwar, Saharanpur, Buria, Lakhnaur, etc.[12] According to *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, they arrived at Lakhnaur on September 13, 1670 CE (*Asu Sudi* 9, 1727 BK).[13] At Kashi, Ayodhya and Mathura, he discoursed with Brahmins who were amazed at his brilliance and sharp intellect. At Lakhnaur, his formal education started. Bhai Sahib Chand taught him Gurmukhi and Bhai Sati Das gave him lessons in Persian. It was here that he received homage from a Muslim *pir*, Arif-ud-Din, to the surprise of the latter's followers whom the *pir* later told that the sight of Gobind Das had revealed to him the secrets of the Infinite.

Sayyed Bhikhan Shah of Thaska, a pious Muslim saint, is also said to have paid obeisance to Gobind Das at this place. As the story goes, he held upon his palms two earthen vessels when he saw the child. The latter touched both. By this Bhikhan Shah interpreted that he would treat both Hindus and Muslims alike.

Young Gobind reached Nanaki Chak in February 1671 CE,[14] where he was received with great affection by the Sikhs.

Soon he acquired proficiency in languages such as Persian, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Hindi and Arabic. Besides, he learnt the art of warfare, horsemanship, swordsmanship and handling of weapons such as lance, bow and arrow, musket and matchlock. His

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interaction with Hindu poets and bards, who were at Chak Nanaki either to seek refuge or opportunity to develop their art, engendered in him a sensitive response to literature. He would also frequently ride into the forests with Kirpal Chand and his other associates for a hunt.

A group of Kashmiri *pandits* under the leadership of Kirpa Ram Dutt of Mattan, who were being pressurised to embrace Islam, came to Anandpur Sahib to seek Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's help on May 25, 1675 CE.[15] The Guru told the *pandits* that a man of piety should be prepared to defy the government at the risk of his life. That was the only way their religion could be saved. Gobind Das asked, "Who could be more pious than the Guru ?" Pleased at the reaction of Gobind Das, the Guru told the *pandits* to inform the governor that if he could convert him to his creed, the *pandits* of Kashmir would offer no further resistance. This was conveyed to Emperor Aurangzeb, who passed an order for the arrest of the Guru.

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, anticipating his immediate arrest, installed his son Gobind Das[16] as his successor and conferred on him the traditional marks of guruship on July 8, 1675 CE.[17] Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested at Malikpur Rangharan and taken to Delhi,[18] where he was asked either to accept Islam or to perform a miracle as evidence of his divine powers. The Guru would not renounce his faith, for he believed that religion is a matter of conviction, and cannot be changed through coercion. He refused to perform any miracles either, since it amounts to interference with the laws of nature or the Will of God. He was, therefore, beheaded publicly in Chandni Chowk on November 11, 1675 CE. The Guru's severed head was brought by Bhai Jaita to Anandpur Sahib, while his body was taken away by Bhai Lakhi Shah, and cremated in his house, where today stands the gurdwara Rakab Ganj in New Delhi. Gobind Rai was deeply moved by Jaita's courage and allegiance, when he heard how his devoted Sikh had defied the Mughal guards. He embraced Jaita and exclaimed, *"Rangreta Guru ka béta"* — the tanner is the Guru's own son.

The martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur symbolised resistance to the tyranny of the theocratic rule, and was a call to build an egalitarian society bound by faith in the oneness of God guaranteeing freedom of worship. This had a deep impact on the young Guru. It seems that the question facing the Guru was that if evil tries to browbeat the righteous with arms, then should the righteous allow to be browbeaten or decide to take up arms and combat and destroy it ? The Guru chose the latter course. In Guru Granth Sahib, at numerous places has been expressed the ideal of a crusader on the path of God, yearning to attain the qualities which forge such a character.

The Guru encouraged various martial sports as a part of his training programme to impart physical fitness to his people. The Guru's principal companions of this time were Sango Shah, Jit Mal, Gopal Chand, Ganga Ram, Mohri Chand, Gopal Rai, Sham Das, Bhai Daya Ram and Bhai Nand Chand, an upright and favourite *masand*.

Not only this, the Guru harnessed literature and the services of literary luminaries. According to the author of *Bansawali Nama*, the Guru issued a *hukamnama* to the Sikhs in 1677 CE inviting poets, writers, painters and scholars to his court. A large number

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of eminent literary figures responded and rendered into Braj ancient Sanskrit as well as colloquial Hindi literature including the stories of Rama and Krishna and the deeds of Chandi. The Guru himself bore a highly artistic and elegant hand at Gurmukhi calligraphy, specimens of which are preserved on the leaves of some copies of the sacred literature scribed in his time.

The Guru and the Hill States

Between the Satluj and the Jamuna lay the states of Kahlur (Bilaspur), Sirmaur (Nahan) and Hindur (Nalagarh). Kahlur lay on both sides of Satluj. On the east of Jamuna lay Garhwal which was not really a part of the Punjab. Between the Ravi and the Satluj lay the very important hill principalities of Kangra, Kulu, Mandi, Suket, Chamba, Nurpur, Guler, Datarpur, Siba, Jaswan and Kutlehr. Between the Ravi and Jhelum several hill principalities such as Jammu, Basohli and Jasrote existed.

All the hill states, right from ancient times, were ruled by Rajput princes, who governed their principalities on the principles of feudal polity and Brahminical orthodoxy. In the early medieval period, when the Sultans established their hegemony in the Punjab, these states were only marginally touched.

In the later medieval period, the situation changed and the Mughal imperial system extended to the hill states more effectively during the reign of Akbar. The rulers of the principalities were officially designated as *zamindars* and required to pay a fixed tribute. They were subject to the supervision and control of the local *faujdars*, those of Jammu and Kangra, and the regional *subedars* or governors.

The Mughal emperors employed force, cunning and diplomacy to keep their political hold strong on the hill rulers. They often resorted to a policy of divide and rule. For instance, Nurpur and Guler were brought into prominence at the cost of Kangra. Even then the Mughals were only partially successful in keeping them politically subservient to them. This was due to their traditional love of independence developed over the past centuries because of the inaccessibility of their locales which were hilly and difficult to traverse, and their never-failing pride in their social system, which otherwise was unprogressive and ultraconservative. The economy was sustained by the agricultural *Rathis* and semi-nomadic *Gujjars* who formed a large proportion of the population. Social life was dominated by the Brahmins who utilized the support of the Rajputs for the rigid enforcement of caste rules and preservation of the traditional caste hierarchy. Religion, often regarded the most important element to refine minds, had not crossed even primitive stages of animism and idol worship, etc. The principal deities worshipped by the people were Shiva or Mahadeva and his consorts — Uma, Shyama, Shakti, Bhawani, Chandi and Kali. Tantric ideas and practices were quite popular. Vaishnavism had made only marginal inroads into the hill areas. Quite a number of hill chieftains patronised Vaishnavism, but at people's level it had little impact.

Belief in monotheism or monism was a far cry from polytheism. So was the concept of a universal society based on social equality, non-discrimination, non-exploitation and dignity of labour, which formed the essential features of certain other

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religious dispensations like Sikhism in the contemporary world.

Such being the state of the polity, society and religion in the hill states, the entry of Sikhism could have hardly been welcome. Sikhism stood for an egalitarian society based on principles of social equality, honest hard labour, freedom from fear and respect for individuals irrespective of caste, creed, birth, gender, social status, etc., arising from full faith in the oneness and singularity of God and universal brotherhood.

The political formulations to which Sikhism lent validity was democracy where the people were free to participate and to spurn the aristocratic exclusiveness associated with the Rajputs. The economic structure recommended by Sikhism was anti-feudal, democratic and egalitarian in spirit and social action.

To sum up, the politico-social model in the hill states was quite different from the model the Gurus envisaged, championed and preached.

The Rajput rulers, hand in glove with socio-religious elites of the hill states, resented in particular the social equality which Sikhism offered to the lowest caste Sudras and the low caste Jats, whom they treated as inferior in every way. Because, in their reckoning, it not only ran counter to their long upheld religious notions, but also levelled a stunning blow to their whole social fabric. Thus, in the face of stout opposition of the hill states and their allies, the progress of Sikhism in the hill states was bound to be slow. Chronologically speaking, the contact of Sikhism with hilly region was peripheral up to the time of Sri Guru Hargobind. In the times of Sri Guru Angad and Sri Guru Amar Das, there were occasional visits of certain devoted Sikhs to this region as also of certain seekers of this region to the Guru's court, as for instance, the *raja* of Haripur visited Goindwal to pay obeisance to Sri Guru Amar Das. The impression of the Guru as also of Sikhism which the people from the hill areas carried was that of reverence. In Guler, one of the hill states, a Sikh *sangat* had been established through a *manjidar*. Bhai Gurdas avers that there were Sikh *sangats* in Sirhind and Kashmir, from which it can be safely assumed that Sikhism at least had established a foothold in the hill states.[19]

In the time of Sri Guru Hargobind, the penetration of Sikhism in the hill areas made some headway. This happened in spite of the fact that the Guru had to undergo incarceration, wage wars against the Mughal imperialism, face opposition of Minas, and recalcitrance of certain *masands*.

Since the Guru's entourage included scholars, preachers and devoted Sikhs as well, besides soldiers, people in general had an opportunity to interact with the Sikhs with the result that their understanding of Sikhism improved.

Within a few years of the assumption of *gurgaddi*, Sri Guru Gobind Singh intensified his activities. Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, he spared no pains to disseminate his message. He also raised an army and reminded the Sikhs that they could offer weapons and other articles required by soldiers as *Daswandh*.[20] He selected a place strategically better situated than Makhowal, and set up a small establishment there.[21] The change was reflected in the appearance of the Guru's *darbar* also. The young Guru would now meet his daily congregation in a tent with elephants

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and horses as a part of the establishment. He would wear an aigrette. The Sikhs called him "*Sacha Patshah*" and even princes from far off places came to Anandpur Sahib to pay obeisance.[22] The whole setting was that of something higher than a regal court.[23]

The scenario at Anandpur Sahib reflected exuberance, vigour and a constructive dynamism. This was looked upon with suspicion by Bhim Chand, the ruler of Bilaspur, who considered it a challenge to his hegemony in the area.

By the eighties, Bhim Chand had set himself on the road to realise his cherished goal. He had successfully beaten back the invasion of the Mughal *faujdar* of Kangra, who intended to replace him with his uncle, Manak. Similarly, his new Wazir Permanand had inflicted a defeat on the *faujdar* of Sirhind and brought laurels to his young master.

It was at this stage when his reputation stood high that he turned his attention to the Guru's activities and appraised them not in the context of the Guru's vision and his grand design, but from his own perspective, or at best from the perspective of the hill states. It was not difficult for him to surmise that not only did the Guru's activities not fit in with the long established social and political order in the hill states, but could also pose a serious threat to his authority. The *Ranjit Nagara*, the maintenance of an army, infusing of egalitarian ideology into the minds of the people, were all regarded as an affront to his authority and a prelude to establishing a state within the state. Nevertheless, Bhim Chand decided to visit the Guru to see things for himself. The Guru received the *raja* in the famous woolen tent which had been presented to him by a disciple, Duni Chand, from Kabul. Other gifts presented to the Guru were also displayed. Bhim Chand was surprised at the richness and splendour of the young Guru, at his confidence and at the devotion of his Sikhs to him. When he returned to Bilaspur, he decided to make it clear to the Guru that since Makhowal fell in his territory, he was within his rights as an overlord to levy a tribute. From the Guru's point of view the question of overlordship was irrelevant, because none of the Gurus had ever paid any tribute either to Hindur or Kahlur till then. Bhim Chand also demanded presents of his choice, for instance, the *Parsadi* elephant, the unique weapon called *panj kala shastar*, which could be used as a sword, a lance, a *gurj*, a gun and a pistol, gifted by Raja Rattan Rai of Assam, and an embroidered *shamiana* (canopy).

The Guru refused to oblige him. Bhim Chand considered it a challenge to his authority and attacked the Guru in 1682 CE,[24] but was beaten back. Fearing that the states on his north and north-eastern border might take advantage of his discomfiture, he hurriedly packed up and went back.[25] In contemplating the attack on the Sikhs, he had also been incited by the governors of Sirhind, Lahore and Jammu.[26]

The unexpected conflict ushered in a period of tension both for Bhim Chand and the Sikhs. In this stage of suspended hostilities, clashes between Sikhs and Bhim Chand's soldiers were inevitable. A large majority of *masands* wanted the Guru to withdraw from the area to avoid conflict. The Guru declined to oblige them. *Masand* Nand Chand, the Guru's maternal uncle Kirpal, and all others supported the Guru's stand. The *masands'* point-of-view obviously was actuated by the fear factor, and certainly it

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did not take into consideration other far-reaching implications of the Guru's acquiescence. In that case, Anandpur Sahib would have lost its independent character as a religious community. This could in turn create difficulties in the process of consummating his design.

Life at Paonta

In 1685 CE, Raja Medini Parkash of Sirmaur (now known as Nahan) invited the Guru to settle in his territory. A large number of the Sikhs in the Guru's township in Bilaspur state accompanied him. According to traditional accounts, Gulab Rai and Sham Das, grandsons of Suraj Mal, were left by the Guru at Anandpur Sahib to look after the Sikhs who stayed behind.[27]

Why did the Guru leave Anandpur Sahib ? The event, as it involved shifting of headquarters and settlement in another state, was not fortuitous or just a freak; it was the result of the interplay of different factors. The first among them of course was the animosity of Bhim Chand. The Guru needed a place where he could carry out his plans undisturbed without interference. Second, the *raja* of Sirmaur (now known as Nahan) cordially invited him to settle in his state, knowing full well that the relations between the Guru and Bhim Chand had gone sour. Besides devotion to the Guru, he had certain mundane motives as well. Sirmaur and Garhwal were neighbouring states engaged in hostilities for several generations. Supported by the Mughal government, the former encroached successfully upon the territory of the latter. During the reign of Aurangzeb, Sirmaur received Kala Garh (near Dehradun), and the Doon was conferred upon Garhwal. This put the two states in dangerous proximity. After Aurangzeb's departure from Delhi in 1679 CE, two new chiefs became rulers of the two states; Medini Parkash (1684-1704 CE) in Sirmaur and Fateh Shah in Garhwal (1684-1717CE). The former desired to strengthen himself by accommodating the Guru in his territories.[28] Having taken the decision to accept the invitation of Medini Parkash, the Guru left Anandpur Sahib in May 1685 CE. Along with him were 500 soldiers, many Sikhs, a large number of poets, scholars and musicians. His baggage consisted of a large number of horses, oxen, camels and elephants. The whole caravan of the Guru passed through Ropar, Kharar, Ramgarh, Rani ka Raipur and Bhurewala. The Guru encamped at Toka situated at the foothills on the border of Sirmaur state.[29]

At Bhurewal, the Chauhan Rajput landlords, who after embracing Islam were generally known as *Ranghars* and had *zamindari* of eighty five[30] villages, entertained the Guru and his cavalcade exactly as their ancestors had done forty years earlier in 1645 CE, when Sri Guru Har Rai went to Nahan by the same route.[31]

At Toka too, these people provided provisions, performed other ancillary services and prayed for the Guru's benediction. The Guru blessed them with the honorific of *Bhuré Shah*. A small gurdwara commemorates the Guru's stay at Toka. A fair is held every year on the tenth day of *Jeth*.[32]

A couple of days later, the *raja* of Nahan came to escort the Guru to his capital. After a short stay at Nahan, the *raja* led the Guru to a spot on the eastern limits of

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Jamuna which formed the boundary between Garhwal and Sirmaur.

The Guru liked the place which soon acquired the name of Paonta — "where the feet rested". On July 22, 1685 CE the Guru laid the foundation of a fortress.[33] Diwan Nand Chand Sangha of Darauli performed the *ardas* and Ram Koer, a descendant of Bhai Budha, broke the ground. The fortress was completed within a very short span of twelve days.[34] Soon hutments arose around the fortress to accommodate the Sikhs. The place had idyllic surroundings and the Guru loved it, because it not only catered to his aesthetic sense, but also provided him requisite place to contemplate and mature his plans for the future.

Meanwhile, Raja Fateh Shah of Sri Nagar (Garhwal) heard of the Guru's repute and paid him a visit. As pointed out earlier, he and the *raja* of Nahan were not on good terms. The Guru mediated and brought about rapprochement between them.[35] The Guru lived at Paonta for three years.[36] During this period he would often go hunting in the surrounding forests. *Bachittar Natak* refers to the Guru hunting big game, and to once killing a tiger with a sword and shield.[37]

The Guru knew the value of literature in the transformation of society. He, therefore, decided to create new literature, as well as translate such old literature, as could inspire the people to fight for the values preached by him and the earlier Gurus. Under his patronage, Paonta became a famous centre of learning and literary activity, and attracted a large number of poets and scholars. Sikh tradition fixes their number at fifty two. According to our estimates, however, there were one hundred poets, besides twenty five other scholars or prose writers,[38] engaged in the literary effort. This number does not include authors of some extant anonymous works.

Though the detailed account of literary compositions of different poets and writers is not known, yet some of their works are available. Sainapat rendered *Chanakya Neeti* from Sanskrit to Braj *bhakha*.[39] Nand Lal[40] composed *Bandgi Nama*. Amrit Rai, Hans Ram, Kuvresh and Mangal translated *Sabha Parb*, *Karan Parb*, *Dharam Parb* and *Salya Parb*, respectively, and were honoured with liberal financial awards.[41] For example, Hans Ram received sixty thousand *takas*. Mangal, Kuvresh and Amrit Rai also were given similar favours in recognition of their services.[42] Mangal was so excited over the Guru's generosity that he called him "*Puran Avtar*" — "Absolute Incarnate", and Anandpur Sahib "The Abode of Bliss". Pandit Jagan Nath,[43] who originally embellished the court of Shahjahan, was also attracted to the Guru and came to Anandpur Sahib and wrote *Adhyatmik Parkash*, saying forever goodbye to his earlier predilection of producing erotic literature. Even the avaricious and ego-bloated poet Chandan[44] was welcome to the court of the Guru. The Guru's personality changed him into a humble servant, and he wrote literature of the type and tenor the Guru desired. Obviously, the leitmotif of the literature created under the sponsorship and inspiration of the Guru seemed to bring the Sanskrit literature within the reach of the common man by having it translated. This has to be understood in the light of the fact that Sanskrit was taught. The Guru very wisely and aptly employed the medium of literature to impart a new orientation to the minds of the people given to passivity. For this purpose the Guru

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did not hesitate to pick up themes from ancient epics and mythology of India to produce verses charged with martial fervour.

In *Var Sri Bhagauti ji ki*, popularly known as *Chandi di Var*, the first *var* of its kind, complete and exhaustive blank verse was used for the first time in Punjabi literature.[45]

Under the literary master-pieces produced/translated during this period, mention may be made of *Chandi Charitar* (I & II), *Var Sri Bhagauti ji ki*, *Shastar Naam Mala*, and *Chaubis Avtar*. The *Chandi Charitar* and *Var Durga ki* are different versions of the same story, taken from the *Markandya Puran*, and represent the eternal clash between good and evil forces, and eventual victory of the former. The purpose is to exhort people to cherish noble values and to fight against their violation and tyranny.

Yet, Durga is not invoked as a goddess. There is an utter absence of worship that is central to *Markandya Puran* text. She is recalled only as a figure of myth and utilised to inspire the people. She is looked upon along with Ram, Krishan or any other *avtar* only as an instrument created for moral purposes.

Side by side with the creation of appropriate literature, the Guru carried on missionary activities with zeal and zest. He held daily congregations in the morning as well as in the evening at Paonta. He undertook religious tours to villages such as Kapal Mochan, Kalsia, Siana and Thanesar. He also visited village Dhankoli on his way from Paonta to Anandpur Sahib. The village Lohar was also hallowed by the Guru's visit. All these places have gurdwaras in memory of the Guru's visits.

A renowned Sufi saint, Pir Badr-ud-Din (1647-1704 CE), popularly known by his nick-name Pir Budhu Shah, was fascinated by the Guru's splendid personality and came to the Guru to feel for himself the Guru's greatness. He held a long discussion with the Guru and was simply captivated by the Guru's knowledge of the Unknown. He turned an ardent devotee of his. The Guru, on his part, showered affection on him, so much so that on his recommendation, the Guru enlisted 500 *Pathans*, who had been dismissed from the Mughal army for petty offences, in his army. From the historical point of view, this gesture of the Guru had great significance. It signalled that in the struggle for upholding righteousness, anyone irrespective of religion, status, birth, and caste *etc.* was free to take part.

The Guru decided to establish a special order of his Sikhs particularly to make comparative study of religions and also to interpret classical Indian tradition in terms of the basic philosophy of Sikhism. The project thus conceived had incidental advantages as well. Since time immemorial, learning and teaching had been the monopoly of Brahmins, *sanyasis* or *bairagis* (ascetics), but the Guru wanted to extend this right to learning and spiritual pursuit to all without distinction of caste. Also, bulk of the classical Indian religious literature was available in Sanskrit only, and, therefore, not accessible to the common man. The Guru decided to make arrangements for the teaching of Sanskrit to his followers, and asked his court poet Raghu Nath to do the needful. He politely declined and pleaded that he was prohibited by convention to teach the language of gods (*Dev Bhasha*) and the holy scriptures to Sudras and women.

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Udasis also showed reluctance to impart the knowledge of Sanskrit and scriptures to the non-Brahmins and non-*sanyasis*.

The Guru selected a few Sikhs and sent them to Benares. Their names were : Karam Singh, Ram Singh, Ganda Singh, Vir Singh, Sobha Singh, Dharam Singh, Daya Singh, Kesar Singh, Mohkam Singh, Gian Singh, Gaja Singh, Chanda Singh and Saina Singh. All these chosen Sikhs studied under the guidance of Pandit Sada Manak. In the eleventh year they came back to the Guru who now had shifted to Anandpur Sahib. Sri Guru Gobind Singh was much pleased to find that they had become really good scholars and gave them different assignments. Pandit Karam Chand was asked to interpret hymns from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in the Guru's court. Bhai Mani Singh received knowledge of six traditional schools of philosophy from him. Bhai Panjab Singh and his disciple Roucha Singh spread Sikhism in Jammu and Kashmir. In 1699 CE, they were administered *pahul* and admitted to the order of the Khalsa. They were called *Nirmalas* — Pure ones. They played a significant role in the dissemination of Sikhism as also in Sikh politics in the eighteenth century. Later on as the time rolled on and the number of the contemporary associates of the Guru or of his staunch followers like Bhai Mani Singh thinned, they began to evince more interest in flaunting themselves as *Vedantic* scholars rather than humble interpreters of Sikh philosophy. Thus they began to superimpose the *Vedantic* point of view on the Sikh theological and philosophical structures. No doubt, they recited *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and encouraged others to do the same, yet they did not do all this for bringing into limelight the distinctiveness of Sikhism, but rather to show it as part of Hindu tradition.[46] The trend is reflected in most of their literary compositions which came into being particularly after the mid-eighteenth century.

Side by side, refining and redefining the new type of militarism, the Guru developed a viable military apparatus, the beginning of which had been made at Anandpur Sahib. The bulk of the Guru's army consisted of the Sikhs from Malwa and Majha regions of the Punjab. They took food from *Guru ka langar*; and uniforms, arms and horses were provided out of the Guru's *golak* (treasury). The soldiers belonged to all castes, and included Muslims also.

The Guru did not employ any professional soldiers, but, there is an instance where he enlisted 500 Pathans at Paonta at the instance of Pir Badr-ud-Din (Pir Budhu Shah). However, that instance seems more of an indicator of Guru's humanitarian worldview rather than organising of a paid army.[47]

The maximum strength of the Guru's army at any time has been estimated to be twenty thousand, and at Paonta it did not exceed five thousand. The artillery men were very few in number, although matchlock men's number was considerable. Horses were procured on payment as well as through offerings from Sikhs. The Guru's own blue horse had become a legend on account of its agility, boldness, steadfastness and intelligence.

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Military Organisation

Forts formed a salient feature of the Guru's defence system. He built the fort of Paonta, and raised walls around the city.

The battle array of the Guru consisted of centre, right flank, left flank, reserve and vanguard. The Guru while advancing always took into consideration the terrain, the enemy's strength and the quality of fighting equipment. Ambuscade was a popular tactic employed by the Guru. Elephants were also valued, particularly for the advance of the army. The *Prasadi* elephant was donated by Raja Rattan Chand, *zamindar* of Assam and another was presented by the *sangat* of Dhaka.[48]

Weapons of the soldiers were given special attention. In addition to the weapons he procured from his disciples, he got them manufactured in his own foundries at Paonta and Anandpur Sahib. The weapons used by the Guru were of four kinds — 1) *Mukt*, 2) *Amukt*, 3) *Mukt-amukt* and 4) *Yantar-mukt*. *Mukt* weapons were those which parted company of the user as for instance arrows. *Amukt* were those weapons which remained with the user such as sword or *kataar*. *Mukt-amukt* weapons could be used while keeping them in the hands as well as throwing them on the enemy. Weapons such as spears and javelins fall in this category. Weapons of the fourth kind, viz., *Yantar-mukt*, were used with the help of mechanical devices.

The Guru's stay at Paonta marked a watershed in his life. He finalised his plans, and evolved suitable strategies to implement them. He produced requisite literature and rallied round himself the most capable persons from different corners of India to harness their wisdom in the service of his mission which he defined with absolute clarity and lucidity. He gave new metaphors, new symbols and new slogans to energise, vitalise and rejuvenate the people given to mental and physical inertia. He organised his internal affairs diligently, made proper arrangements for carrying on correspondence with *sangats* and eminent Sikhs. It is likely that the letters from *sangats*/disciples were received and registered.[49] Similarly, the *hukamnamas* or letters from the Guru were registered before they were sent to different places. There is every possibility that the copies of the *hukamnamas* were kept by the Guru's establishment and proper arrangements made to keep record of the amount of *daswandh* and other offerings. He organised an appropriate war machine. Lest his militaristic organisation should reduce itself to an organ of tyranny, the Guru reconstructed the concept of militarism. The Guru viewed and reviewed the policies of the contemporary governments of both the hill chieftains and the Mughals. He also observed the objectives, the policies and the extent of the influence of Naqshbandis, who had their centres at important places such as Sirhind, Lahore, Delhi, Agra and Jaunpur. He carefully studied their theology, social ideas and attitude towards Sikhs and other non-Muslims as well as liberal Muslims. He also took note of different faiths and their impact on society, and made bold to denounce what he considered contrary to his vision. He fine-tuned the Sikh ideology left in legacy by his predecessors. He forged a theory of *dharamyudh* — struggle for righteousness, which was different from the Mohammedan concept of *jehad* and the Christian concept of crusade in as much as its causative factor was injustice, tyranny

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and unrighteousness; and its goal was the establishment of social order based on righteousness, which was defined not in terms of any specific group or race or religion, but in terms at once universalistic and humanistic.

Battle of Bhangani — September 18, 1688 CE

On September 18, 1688 CE,[50] the Guru fought the battle of Bhangani against Fateh Shah and his allies. As to the circumstances which led to the battle, versions vary. The Sikh records state that Bhim Chand, the *raja* of Bilaspur, asked the Guru for the loan of the *Parsadi* elephant, both to assert his suzerainty and to use it on the occasion of the betrothal ceremony of his son. The Guru refused to oblige. An embittered Bhim Chand vowed to avenge the affront. Bhim Chand consulted some of his brother chieftains like Raja Kirpal of Katoch, as to the course he should pursue to punish the Guru. It was ultimately decided that this question should be finally taken up as soon as the ensuing marriage of Bhim Chand's son with the daughter of Fateh Shah was over. Fateh Shah himself had been consulted about it. In the meantime, the Guru had retired to Paonta where he was greatly admired as a celebrity. Fateh Shah, therefore, wanted to settle the disputes between him and the *raja* of Bilaspur amicably.

As the day of the marriage approached, the groom's marriage party started for Srinagar, the capital of Garhwal state. The shortest route to Srinagar passed through Paonta. The Guru allowed the bridegroom and core members of the marriage party to cross the river at the Paonta ferry. The rest of the party, which was in fact a large contingent of fully armed soldiers, was not allowed and had to follow a longer circuitous route to reach Srinagar.

This further annoyed Bhim Chand. He looked for an opportunity to give vent to his anger, which came when the Guru sent Diwan Nand Chand[51] to Srinagar with rich presents for the bride at the *tambol* ceremony.[52] Bhim Chand openly threatened that he would sever all connections with Fateh Shah and return without marrying his son if the presents were accepted. Nand Chand had to bring all the presents back to Paonta. On the way, Nand Chand was attacked by Bhim Chand's men, but he escaped unharmed. As soon as the marriage ceremony was over, Bhim Chand held a conference with Fateh Shah and some other hill chiefs, such as Kirpal of Katoch, Gopal of Guler, Hari Chand of Hindur, and the *raja* of Jaswal, who were there. They decided to attack the Guru at Paonta.

From the above account, three points emerge. i) The real cause of the battle was the estrangement between Bhim Chand and the Guru. ii) The Guru's refusal to oblige the *raja* by loaning him the *Parsadi* elephant and allow passage to the armed soldiers accompanying the marriage party through Paonta provided the immediate cause. iii) Fateh Shah was forced to join the war under threat from Bhim Chand.

The *rajas* of Garhwal had their own reasons also to hate the Sirmaur royal house for its being an instrument in the hands of the Mughals, who wanted suzerainty over the rulers of Garhwal. Moreover, the Sirmaur *rajas*, who were then basking in the sunshine of the Mughal favour, had seldom missed an opportunity of territorial gains at the expense of Garhwal.

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The Kangra and Shimla Hills had been brought under the sovereignty of the Mughals by the time of Jehangir. During the time of Shahjahan, attempts were made to bring Garhwal also under the influence of the Mughal Rule.[53] In 1635 CE, Najabat Khan, the Faujdar of the country at the foot of the Kangra Hills, was entrusted with the task of ensuring Mughal hegemony over Garhwal. Mandhatta, the grandfather of Medini Parkash, had helped him. The campaign failed, in spite of a few initial successes. Najabat's failure cost him his position and *jagir*, although Sirmaur ruler was allowed to retain the territory conquered in the initial stages.[54] In 1654 CE, Shahjahan sent another expedition. Mandhata was again prevailed upon to render help. However, Mandhata expired before the campaign was actually launched, and his son and successor, Subhag Parkash, honoured the promise made by his father. The campaign, being a grand success, the *raja* of Sirmaur, Subhag Parkash, was given the territory of Kotaha,[55] which he occupied after expelling the *zamindar* of the area.

To Aurangzeb, Raja Subhag Parkash rendered important services. He intercepted the correspondence between Dara, who was in the Punjab making frantic efforts to gain the Mughal throne, and Sulaiman, who was at that time, a guest of Prithvi Shah, the Garhwal ruler.

With the twin purpose of bringing the ruler of Garhwal within the ambit of the Mughal influence and persuading him to hand over Sulaiman to the Mughals, Aurangzeb commissioned Ra'ad Khan to undertake the expedition.[56] Subhag Parkash once again rendered the much-needed help. As a result of this expedition, Subhag Parkash got the area named Kala Khar identified in the Sirmaur State with the modern area of Kalagadh[57] which lies near Dehradun.[58]

Subhag Parkash expired in 1664 CE, and Budh Parkash succeeded him. During his reign (1664-1684 CE) the Mughal government withdrew its preferential treatment enjoyed by Subhag or Budh Parkash.[59] This was because Medini Shah (he was different from Medini Parkash of Sirmaur), the heir-apparent to the Garhwal throne, had handed over Sulaiman Shah to Aurangzeb in December, 1660 CE, and soon after, when he became the *raja*, he had recognised the Mughal emperor as his suzerain.[60]

In appreciation of the submissive demeanour of Medini Shah, Aurangzeb handed back the Doon to the Garhwal State.

Now the situation as it stood during Aurangzeb's reign was that with Sirmaur possessing Kalagadh and Garhwal owning the Doon, the boundaries of the two rival states got mixed up in such a way that Aurangzeb was able to exploit the situation to his own advantage. Though the situation was explosive, yet no open conflict occurred. In 1684 CE, Budh Parkash and Medini Shah died. They were succeeded by Jog Raj under the title of Medini Parkash in Sirmaur, and Fateh Shah in Garhwal.[61] Both the new chiefs were ambitious men of ability, and for that very reason they were afraid of each other. While watching each other's moves on the frontier, they had to be on guard against surprise attacks. It was in this background that Medini Parkash invited the Guru to Sirmaur state and allowed him to build a fort at Paonta, a place guarding the only convenient route from one state to the other.

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The Guru, whose relations with Bhim Chand of Kahlur were strained, had welcomed the invitation and shifted his headquarters to Paonta.

There was every likelihood of the Guru being involved in the boundary dispute, if it arose between two rival states. But he tackled the problem with a finesse worthy of a great statesman. He improved relations between Sirmaur and Garhwal.[62] His success in accomplishing the task was indeed a miracle. It seems that Ram Rai also played a positive role in getting the things straightened out.[63]

With the passage of time, the relations between Sirmaur and Garhwal got strained once again. Fateh Shah decided to break the agreement and bring all the disputed territory between the two states under him by force. As a first step the Garhwal ruler marched towards Paonta, which was so close to the border and so strategically placed that Fateh Shah considered it imperative to break the headquarters of the Guru at Paonta. In this project, Fateh Shah was helped by the chiefs of Dadhwar and Jaswal, Gaji Chand of Chandel, Gopal of Guler, and Hari Chand of Kotiwal. According to later Sikh chroniclers the number of chiefs who joined Fateh Shah stood at fifteen.[64] The Guru, however, forestalled Fateh Shah and checked the invading army at the point where it crossed the river Giri.

The opposing forces met in the field of Bhangani about six miles to the northeast of Paonta on the plains between the Jamuna and the Giri, not far from the city of Rajpura on the Missourie road. Just on the eve of the battle, four hundred Pathan mercenaries under their leaders Hayat Khan, Najabat Khan, Bhikhan Khan and Jawahar Khan, who had been on the Guru's pay, were seduced by the hill chiefs by flaunting rich rewards, and they deserted the Guru to join the enemy. Only Kalé Khan with his one hundred men remained faithful to the Guru. One thousand Udasis with the exception of their leader Kirpal also left the Guru. The Guru's army, which comprised 2000 soldiers, was thus reduced to 1000 soldiers, while the enemy forces numbered 10000, ten times outnumbering the Guru's forces.[65]

Even then, the Guru remained unaffected. He correctly anticipated the route which the Garhwal troops would follow, and occupied a hillock from where he could block Fateh Shah's march on Paonta, and established himself on an elevation which was of immense tactical advantage. The bulk of the reserve, with the hillock in between, was not visible to the rival commanders, thereby enabling the Guru's troops to undertake manoeuvres unsuspected by the enemy.

The Guru himself, standing on an elevated ground, could clearly watch the deployment and movement of the enemy forces on the other side.

From the contemporary or semi-contemporary records, which throw light on the battle, it is difficult to comprehend clearly the way the two armies were deployed. However, the impression that emerges is that both the armies were divided into units with separate leaders making their moves under their respective supreme commanders, Fateh Shah and Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

The battle commenced with great determination on both sides. The five sons of Bibi Viro — Sangho Shah, Jit Mal, Gopal Chand, Ganga Ram and Mohri Chand launched

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the attack. They were ably backed by Daya Ram, Dewan Chand and the two Kirpals : one, the Guru's maternal uncle and the other, an Udasi *mahant*. Kirpal (*mahant*) hit Hayat Khan on the head and killed the deserter. This was quickly followed by Sahib Chand's entry into the fray to kill the murderous Khan from Khorasan.[66] At this juncture Pir Budhu Shah alongwith his two brothers, seven sons, and 700 men, arrived to help the Guru and to supplement his forces. Up to this time Fateh Shah's side was on the defensive. Then *rajas* Gopal and Hari Chand launched a vigorous offensive. The Guru ordered Jit Mal and his men to advance. For some time the Guru's prospects looked very bleak. At this juncture, Jit Mal with his spear struck Hari Chand who fell down and had to be carried off the field unconscious. In the confusion that followed, Kesri Shah Jaswalia and Modhur Shah Dadwalia, two of the prominent chiefs on Fateh Shah's side, escaped being killed only because the Guru's men were not allowed to hit a fleeing enemy.[67] At this moment, Hari Chand regained consciousness, and immediately became alive to the duties of a leader. He recalled the hill troops and the Pathans, and the last phase of the battle started. The Guru sent Sangho Shah or Shah Sangram, as the Guru would call him, to foil the offensive of Hari Chand. He fought hard, led his men well, killed Najabat Khan and many of his men, but only at the cost of his own life.[68] The Guru who had not taken actual part in the fray till then, now sprang into action. He moved forward and struck Bhikhan Shah on the face. The blow was so hard that Bikhan Shah could not survive. Now began the great duel with bows and arrows between the Guru and Hari Chand. The Guru had a narrow escape three times, but ultimately aimed his arrow at Hari Chand and killed him.[69] The death of Hari Chand disarrayed the hill forces and they made a disorderly retreat. The Guru's victory was complete.[70]

Fateh Shah returned to Srinagar in ignominy, totally crestfallen. The battle was fought for about nine hours. The Guru's Sikhs had vindicated themselves in the battlefield with honour. They had displayed great skill in swordsmanship, spearing, archery, horse-riding, and hand-to-hand combat.

Just after the battle, the Guru went to the place where lay the dead bodies of Sangho Shah, Jit Mal and other Sikhs. He ordered the slain on both the sides to be disposed of with due honour. The bodies of Sikhs were cremated, those of the Hindus were given a watery grave in the adjacent river, and those of the Muslims buried with all solemnity. The wounded were properly tended. The dead bodies of Sangho Shah and Jit mal, and Pir Budhu Shah's sons were brought to Paonta for cremation/burial.

On returning to the fort of Paonta, the Guru held a *darbar*, bestowed robes of honour and other gifts upon the valiant soldiers and generals.[71] Pir Budhu Shah asked for the fallen hair of the Guru, which the Guru gave him along with a turban, a comb, and a *hukamnama* eulogizing his services.[72]

The battle of Bhangani brought into focus many points of importance. It bolstered up the morale of the Sikhs. It instilled new confidence among them. It demonstrated that the kinetic power of the ideology, coupled with appropriate organisation was more than a match for the amassed might of princes and potentates. The Guru got convinced

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that the mercenaries were no substitute for the persons imbued with the spirit of mission. The battle also highlighted that all was not well with the internal organisation of the Sikhs. The *masands* as a group had gone corrupt, and were more interested in their selfish ends than the Guru's call. Instead of performing their duty of linking the people with the Guru's message, they exploited the innocent people surcharged with devotion for the Guru. This raised the question whether the *masand* system should be scrapped or retained.

The battle was significant from another point of view also. Nearly fifteen hill chieftains had combined their military strength to attack the Guru. The combination of so many chiefs within a short time was indeed a thing to take note of as the Guru had done nothing to provoke them. He was not a ruler and had no principality. To engineer such a massive attack on him was obviously unprovoked and morally unjustified.

Under the circumstances, the Guru was constrained to think that the hill chieftains, including Fateh Shah of Garhwal, had been motivated by certain ulterior designs. This could possibly be the annihilation of the Sikh movement, since in their reckoning, it had the potential of destabilising their socio-political system in which they had been nursed, which they had lived for so long, and which gave them their pre-eminent position in society.

Dr Hari Ram Gupta says that the hill chieftains were instigated by the Mughal authorities, but this view seems to be rather far-fetched, at least at this stage. There is no concrete evidence to show that the Mughals encouraged the hill chieftains to organise and to lead an expedition against the Guru. The Guru, therefore, had to be wary of them in formulating his plans, especially when even the ruler of Sirmaur had preferred to remain aloof from the battle.

Life at Anandpur Sahib

The Guru's stay at Paonta after the battle of Bhangani was very short, one month and ten days, according to Sarup Singh Kaushish.[73] He left Paonta Sahib on *Katak Sudi Trodsi* 1745 BK for Kapal Mochan, an ancient pilgrimage centre of the Hindus about twenty kilometres from Jagadhri. The Guru delivered his blessings and message to the large number of people, who had gathered there to celebrate the annual fair held in memory of Kapal Mochan on the full moon day in *Katak* (October 28, 1688 CE). The Guru held a special congregation, and honoured his Sikhs with *siropas* consisting of a saffron coloured piece of coarse cloth.[74]

From there, the Guru went to Sadhaura to console Bibi Nasiran, Pir Budhu Shah's wife, on the death of her two sons in the battle of Bhangani. The Pir was simply overwhelmed, and in a spirit of utter surrender and gratitude uttered, "How beneficent is God to me who enabled my sons to lay down their lives in His service."

After Sadhaura, the Guru pitched his camp at Laharpur,[75] fifteen kilometres from Sadhaura. There he spent over two weeks. Pir Budhu Shah made it a point to visit him frequently. From Laharpur the Guru sent his armies to Anandpur Sahib, and he himself proceeded to Toka which he left shortly to enter Ramgarh state.[76] He encamped at

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Tabra for more than a week. From there, he left for Raipur, the headquarters of Raipur state in response to the request of the queen of the place,[77] who was acting as regent for her minor son. She waited upon the Guru, and offered eleven hundred rupees and a well-caprisoned horse. It was here that Ranghars of Toda village stole the Guru's camels in the darkness of night, and passed them on to their relatives at Laha, where under pressure from people, they had to return the animals to the Guru. Two gurdwaras stand at Raipur, one outside the fort of Raipur where the Guru encamped, and the other inside the fort where the Guru dined as the *rani*'s guest.

Next stay of the Guru was at Mani Majra[78] where Mata Raj Kaur accorded a hearty welcome (*Maghar Sudi Dasmi*, 1745 BK, corresponding to November 22, 1688 CE). Therefrom, he went to village Dhakauli[79] and addressed the *sangat* of the village and also met Ishar Das, the *masand* of the place. After this, the Guru met Nihang Khan, the *zamindar* of the area close to the present-day Ropar city. He was so moved that he decided to dedicate his all in the cause of the Guru. This happened on the *massya* of *Maghar* 1745 BK (1688 CE).[80]

Later, the Guru visited the hallowed places of Ropar, Ghanaula, Bunga, Atari, etc., before he arrived at Kiratpur where he stayed with Mata Sulakhani. Bhai Amar Chand, the grandson of Guru Har Rai, and Deep Chand and Nand Chand, the sons of Suraj Mal, came to pay obeisance to the Guru.

What made the Guru leave Paonta immediately after the battle is not clear. According to Dr Fauja Singh, Anandpur Sahib was strategically a much better place than Paonta in the state of Sirmaur, and that is why after about three years only, the Guru returned to Anandpur Sahib. But this does not seem to be the whole explanation. It seems that the disappointing attitude of the ruler of Sirmaur also contributed to the decision. Sandwiched between Fateh Shah as his avowed enemy on one side and Medini Parkash, an indifferent friend on the other, the Guru was bound to rethink.

In the meanwhile Bhim Chand had also softened towards the Guru. He had seen for himself that the Guru was a force to reckon with, and that it was not easy to dislodge him from Anandpur Sahib. Rather he was a harmoniser and a champion of peace and righteousness. Besides, one of his family members had become a devotee of the Guru. It is on record that Rani Champa Devi, mother of Bhim Chand, held the Guru in high veneration and took pleasure in inviting him to her home frequently. The political ambition of Bhim Chand also played its role. During Sri Guru Gobind Singh's absence from Anandpur Sahib, Bhim Chand's position in the hill politics had changed for the better. Known chiefly as the head of an important state till 1685 CE, he was now acknowledged as an outstanding military leader. Because he had, in 1686 CE, won a great victory over the combined forces of Bashahar, Mandi and Mothai, who had attacked Bidhi Chand, the *raja* of Kulu, the maternal uncle of Bhim Chand.[81]

The hill *rajas* had the tradition of rebelling against the Mughals. The first widespread rebellion had taken place in the reign of Akbar.[82] The *rajas* of Nurpur and Basu, Suraj Mal and Jagat Singh, had revolted in the later years of Jehangir's rule and early years of Shahjahan's rule. In a joint effort during the reign of Aurangzeb in 1675 CE,

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they repulsed the then Mughal governor, who had invaded the hills.[83] With the emperor's sudden return from the north-west, however, the victory could not be sustained, and the chiefs fell apart. Now again with Aurangzeb involved in the Maratha war in the far-off Deccan, and the imperial administration in north India fast losing its grip over the affairs in north India, the hill *rajas* felt that they could liberate themselves from the Mughal yoke by a concerted and united military action with participation of states from all the three groups — Shimla, Kangra and Jammu.[84]

Bhim Chand saw in the victor of Bhangani a valuable ally. He, therefore, sought rapprochement with the Guru, which was eventually reached, through the mediation of the queen of Raipur. Sri Guru Gobind Singh used the changed circumstances and the rapprochement with Bhim Chand to build up his headquarters, which bore a deserted look. He renewed his contacts with his disciples in the Majha and Doaba regions of the Punjab. Many of its inhabitants who had accompanied him to Paonta came back. Anandpur Sahib began to bustle with new life. A number of poets, scholars and thinkers came to pay their homage to the Guru. Many of them brought their families with them and made Anandpur Sahib their home. He rapidly increased the strength of the army. In addition, he took some very important steps for defence of the town. He built a chain of forts, viz., Anandgarh, Kesgarh, Lohgarh, Holgarh, Fatehgarh, Taragarh — with Kesgarh in the centre and others around it. Anandpur Sahib, which he had made his headquarters, was situated in potentially hostile territory. Bhim Chand's attitude could change any time, and the political atmosphere of the region never portended stability, always likely to cause flare-ups even on trivial issues among the hill *rajas* or between the hill *rajas* and the Guru.

Expedition of Alif Khan

Two years after Sri Guru Gobind Singh came back to Anandpur Sahib, the combination of the *rajas* consisting of Gopal Chand of Guler, Ram Singh of Jaswan, Prithvi Chand of Dadowal, Kesri Chand Jaswal and Sukhdev Singh of Jasrotta, stopped paying the annual tribute to the Mughals. The *faujdars* of Kangra and Jammu, who were responsible for collection, sought help from the government of Lahore in this task. A strong contingent under Mian Khan, with Alif Khan as his deputy, led the expedition against the hill chiefs.[85] The object of this expedition was to crush the resistance simultaneously in the Jammu and Kangra regions. Mian Khan himself went to Jammu and sent Alif Khan to Kangra.[86]

Alif Khan moved to Nadaun, thirty kilometres south of Kangra, which seems to have been a *naib faujdari* with a small contingent to look after the eastern part of the Kangra state. His aim was to make Nadaun his base, and from there swoop upon Bhim Chand to quickly crush the challenge of the hill *rajas*. If his movement was quick, Bhim Chand may have no time to seek help from outside. He selected an elevated ground and raised a wooden fortress on it.[87] Besides, he asked the *faujdar* of Kangra to prevail upon the hill *rajas* who had joined the rebels, to come with their forces to Nadaun. In response, Kirpal of Kangra and Dayal of Bijarwal actually joined Alif Khan.[88]

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Bhim Chand, contrary to the expectations of Alif Khan, acted with speed and alacrity. Raj Singh and Ram Singh Jaswal[89] immediately rushed to his help, since their territories were very close to Nadaun. The *rajas* of distant states also sent help, although they did not physically participate. Prithvi Chand of Dadwal[90] sent his contingent. Sukhdev, a Hindu *ghazi* from Jasrot, also came to participate in the impending war. Bhim Chand specially invited the Guru on the occasion.[91] The Guru came in person at the head of a strong contingent equipped with bows, arrows, swords, spears and a few muskets, in support of the movement for not paying the annual tribute.

Though Bhim Chand had mustered a strong force, yet it was no easy task to wrest victory. The enemy was entrenched in the fortress, which though not very strong, being made of wood, provided to its occupants a cover denied to Bhim Chand. Moreover, Alif Khan's forces, being arrayed on an elevation, had a distinct advantage over Bhim Chand's forces.

Bhim Chand opened the attack. The sharp arrows and the shots could make no impact on the enemy in the fort. Bhim Chand led another attack invoking 'Hanuman'[92] for help. Kirpal fought with great determination and exhibited true valour of a Rajput. But the allies fought desperately and soon the troops of Katoch were surrounded on all sides. The people of the tribes of Naiglu, Panglu, Jaswal and Guler advanced in an orderly manner. On the other side, Raja Dayal of Bijarwal put up a mighty defence.[93] At this critical juncture, the Guru played a most crucial part in the battle. He took up his gun and aimed it at Dayal, who fell to the ground. The battle was turned in favour of the allies and the enemy driven into the river.[94]

Alif Khan and his men fled.[95] They crossed the river Beas, and Bhim Chand's victory was complete. The *rajas* of Jaswal, Guler and other states hastened to their capitals for fear of Mughal reprisal on their respective states. Sri Guru Gobind Singh stayed there for eight days[96] and then marched with his followers to Anandpur Sahib. Bhim Chand alone with his troops remained behind at Nadaun[97] and reached an understanding with Alif Khan through Kirpal Chand Katoch, who acted as intermediary. Bhim Chand and his associate *rajas* settled terms of peace without consulting the Guru. The scenario, as it developed after Nadaun victory, is not clear. But from Bhim Chand's role in later years, it appears that Bhim Chand and his associate *rajas* had agreed to pay tribute, thereby recognising Mughal suzerainty.

The Guru and his followers while still on their way to Anandpur Sahib had to punish the inhabitants of Alsun who refused to sell supplies to them and ridiculed the Sikh religion.[98]

This village was dominated by the Rajputs having ties of lineage with Bhim Chand and aversion for the Guru and his mission. After rapprochement of Bhim Chand with the *rajas* and the Mughal government, they thought that it was an appropriate occasion to pick up dispute with the Guru to please their master, besides giving vent to their own innate hatred. The Guru under such circumstances had no alternative, but to punish the villagers. The Guru, in spite of his help to Bhim Chand in the battle of Nadaun, gained no advantage from Bhim Chand. According to S.S. Bal :

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> The Guru, however, won over two friends in Raja Raj Singh and Raja Ram Singh. Raj Singh's state, Jawan, lay to the north of Anandpur Sahib and watched the only route that the Mughal *faujdar* at Kangra could take to harm the Guru at his headquarters. Guler lay towards the north west of Anandpur Sahib linking the Guru with his devoted following in the present district of Hoshiarpur. He could not thus be easily threatened by Bhim Chand even with the Mughal support from Kangra.[99]

The Guru severed all connections with Bhim Chand.

The experience of the Guru at Nadaun convinced him that he could not hope to depend for long on the friendship of his two neighbours, and, therefore, he stepped up his activities to build up his strength. During the next three years and nine months, when he had undisturbed peace, he planned to strengthen his defence. He gave his army a strong social base by giving a call to his followers not only to come to Anandpur Sahib in greater numbers every year, but also to make the city their home. Side by side he attended to his religious duties, and also revived the literary atmosphere as at Paonta.

Dilawar Khan's Attempt to Weaken the Guru's Power — 1693 CE

Large congregations at Anandpur Sahib and the Guru's rapidly increasing military strength unnerved the Kangra *faujdar*, and possibly a few hill *rajas*. Their nervousness increased at the thought of the influence which the Guru brought to bear upon the hill chiefs to stop payment of tribute to the Mughal exchequer, and its wider ramifications. They, therefore, sought Aurangzeb's directions as to how to meet the menace.

The emperor, in response to this representation, directed his *faujdars* of Delhi, Sirhind, Lahore and Jammu to stop the Guru's congregations. A special order was issued in November 1693 CE, to the governor of Sirhind to "admonish Gobind Das, son of Tegh Bahadur, and to make him follow the instructions of the Emperor."[100] Accordingly, Dilawar Khan,[101] the *faujdar* of Kangra, organised a series of attacks with the intention of breaking the Guru's power at Anandpur Sahib.

Khanzada's Expedition — 1694 CE

Dilawar Khan sent his son, Khanzada Rustam Khan, to curb the power of the Guru at Anandpur Sahib in November-December 1694 CE. He wanted to take the Guru by surprise. He crossed the Satluj with a thousand soldiers under cover of darkness at about midnight, but just then the Guru's *deoridar*, Alam Khan,[102] alerted the Guru. Immediately, *Ranjit Nagara* (literally, "Battle-winning Drum") was sounded. The Sikhs, with alacrity and promptitude, took up their arms and with the zeal of crusaders arranged themselves in a battle array to give a hot welcome to the enemy. The quick formations of the Sikhs bewildered the enemy, and the guns of the Sikhs which began to discharge volleys of shots and murderous fire, altogether terrified the enemy and they were constrained to reel back with their weapons unused.[103] While going back, the soldiers of Khanzada plundered village Barwan, stayed for some time at Bhalan and then returned to Dilawar Khan crestfallen. Thus, the Guru got the victory without much fight.[104] Many of the Khanzada's soldiers lost their lives while crossing the flooded ravine. The

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Sikhs, up to this day, gratefully call the ravine by the name of *Himayati Nala* — 'the helpful brook'.

Hussain Khan's Expedition — 1695 CE

The failure of Khanzada piqued Dilawar Khan to plan another expedition against the Guru. He chose Hussain Khan,[105] perhaps the ablest general with the Kangra *faujdar*, for the purpose. Hussain Khan marched with fury and carried whatever came before him. He brought Madhakar Shah, the *raja* of Dhadwal, to his knees, and plundered Doon. Kirpal Chand, the brother of the *raja* of Kangra, joined him. Bhim Chand of Kahlur too cast his lot with Hussain, most probably with a view to achieving double-purpose, i.e., winning the favour of the Mughals and annihilating the Guru and the movement he was piloting.

All three, Hussain, Kirpal and Bhim Chand, alongwith their armies, made plans to proceed to Anandpur Sahib, but just then an incident occurred which changed the course of future developments. The Guru had anticipated their design and made preparations to foil it. On hearing of the submission of Bhim Chand and Kirpal, Gopal, the *raja* of Guler, alongwith a powerful chief Ram Singh, tried to negotiate a settlement with Hussain Khan. In his pride and blinded by his successes, however, Hussain Khan did not listen, and threatened him with dire consequences if he did not pay ten thousand rupees as war levy. Gopal pleaded his inability to pay, and came back.[106] Thereupon, Hussain besieged the town of Guler. Finding that the inhabitants of the town were incapable of withstanding the rigours of the siege, Gopal sued for peace, but nothing less than ten thousand rupees could satisfy Hussain. In this situation the helpless Gopal approached the Guru who sent Sangatia alongwith seven other Sikhs to re-open the negotiations on his behalf. Sangatia on his own security brought the latter in Hussain's camp to negotiate, but the two parties could not reach any settlement. Kirpal and Bhim Chand began to conspire to arrest Gopal, but the latter escaped in time. Kirpal lost his temper and fulminated in fury. He together with his brave commanders Kimmat, Himmat, Hussain, Khan and Bhim Chand, lost no time and attacked the city. Fighting commenced with vengeance. Raja Gopal was helped by the Guru's commanders, Lal Chand, Ganga Ram, Kirpa Ram and Agri Brar, along with 300 chosen soldiers and Raja Ram Singh of Jaswan. Hussain won a lot of applause for his valour, but a sharp pointed arrow struck him dead. Raja Kirpal and several other brave officers such as Himmat and Kimmat also fell fighting. On the side of Gopal, there was a heavy loss. Sangatia and his seven comrades were killed.[107] Agri Singh Brar also fell fighting.

Gopal came out victorious. The Guru felt happy and correctly appraised that the rain of bullets that was originally intended for him was showered by the Almighty elsewhere.[108] The Guru calls this battle as Hussaini Battle.[109]

Another Expedition — 1695 CE

Dilawar Khan sent yet another expedition. Jujhar Singh and Chandan Rai[110] were sent to Jaswan, but they could not achieve the purpose. They undoubtedly recovered

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Bhalan,[111] fourteen kilometers from Anandpur Sahib, a strategic place in the state, which had previously been captured by the hill chiefs and was now in the charge of the Jaswan contingent. But before they could proceed further, Gaj Singh[112] of Jaswan with his contingent fell upon them. Jujhar Singh and Chandan Rai fought like lions, but were soon overpowered. Jujhar Singh was killed in action and Chandan Rai fled. The enemy failed to reach Anandpur Sahib and retired.[113] The result of the defeat of the imperial forces was that the Mughal administration in the hill area fell in disarray, much to the chagrin of Aurangzeb, who was away in southern India to extend his sovereignty to the Shia states and the Marathas. The hill *rajas* took courage to withhold payment of their annual tributes in defiance of their agreement. The Sikhs got emboldened, and their attitude towards the imperial authorities hardened. The scenario being grave and disturbing, Aurangzeb realised that something drastic had become absolutely necessary, and accordingly sent one of his sons, Prince Muazzam, afterwards known as Bahadur Shah, for the restoration of order in the hill area and for the recovery of unpaid tribute.[114] Prince Muazzam was born in September 1643 CE. He was arrested by Aurangzeb in 1686 CE on the suspicion that he reached a secret understanding with the Shia ruler of Golcunda to make use of his services later on certain occasions. He was set free in 1691 CE. He remained viceroy of the north-west region, including the Punjab and Afghanistan, from 1696-1699 CE.[115] He resided at Kabul and occasionally visited other provinces.

The prince took up his position in August, 1696 CE at Lahore[116] and from there he directed operations against the hill *rajas*. He deputed Mirza Beg to teach a lesson to hill *rajas*. He inflicted upon them defeat after defeat, plundered their country, set fire to villages, took hundreds of prisoners and in order to make an example of them had them shaved clean and their faces blackened, seated them on donkeys and marched them throughout the disturbed area. Even those who deserted the Guru or turned apostates or grabbed the offerings collected for the house of Guru also suffered destruction and humiliation. After Mirza Beg, the Prince sent four more officers who also pursued the policy of Mirza Beg relentlessly and with severity.[117]

Under the circumstances, the Guru, no doubt, passed through turbulent times.[118] He, therefore, prepared himself to meet any contingency. He sent a *hukamnama*[119] dated August 2, 1696 CE, directing some leading disciples such as Bhai Triloka and Bhai Rupa to rush to Anandpur Sahib along with their followers. He also wrote to the progenitors of the Phulkian house to come to Anandpur Sahib.[120] But the prince, while taking strong measures to humiliate and demoralise the hill *rajas*, left the Guru untouched, since presumably he did not find any justification to proceed against the Guru. The Guru had no principality, nor did he flaunt sovereignty up to 1696 CE and the Guru took arms against the Mughals only twice, for the first time at Nadaun and for the second time at Guler. In both these cases, the Guru came to assist the hill *rajas* so that the Mughals did not find opportunity to financially squeeze and socially degrade the people and that they did not proceed against him under the influence of the sullen Mughal officers or local elements inimical to the Guru.[121]

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The Guru's power did not pose any threat to Mughal authority, a fact which had been amply brought home to him at Lahore by Mahabat Khan, the then governor of the Punjab. Besides, the prince himself was openminded, liberal and particularly considerate towards saints; understandably, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, whom he called *darvesh*, a saint, in one of his royal rescripts, could not be a victim of anybody's whims or distorted thinking.

Nand Lal Goya, who was a litterateur in the court of the Guru and had formerly been in the service of the prince at Agra, also seemed to have exercised his personal influence with the prince in favour of the Guru.[122]

Real politik also warranted good behaviour towards the Guru. The prince had seen for himself that the Guru had a following totally dedicated to him. That could be useful in case the struggle for the throne ensued after the death of his father, who had grown very old, and could be expected to leave this world any time.

Certain other issues also demand answers before we close the account of the expedition of the prince : i) How did the hill *rajas* react to the Guru under the circumstances ii) Why did the Guru keep quiet and iii) What had the Guru to say regarding those persons who deserted him or turned apostates or made away with the offerings of the Sikhs deposited with them by the faithfuls ?

The hill *rajas* tried to involve the Guru on their side and against the Mughals, but the Guru did not respond, because he had observed for himself that they were selfish and had always tried to cause demoralisation among the Sikhs. The pressure tactics did not have their effect on the internal cohesion of the Sikhs. However, many of those with little committment to the Sikh precepts left the Guru, some out of fear of the Mughal forces, some under the instigation of the hill *rajas*, and some prompted by the urge to grab the offerings, otherwise meant for the Guru.

According to Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, the Prince did not touch the Guru because of some kind of understanding between the Guru and the government. The learned scholars base their conclusion on a supposed statement of the Guru as recorded in *Bachittar Natak*[123].

Sirdar Kapur Singh has severely criticised the statement of Teja Singh and Ganda Singh. In *The Baisakhi of Sri Guru Gobind Singh*, he says :

> The learned authors make a most amazing statement about the Sikh doctrine of the church and the states inter relationship, which is wholly unwarranted and which is pernicious to the extreme. Neither the context hints at any such understanding, nor the text is susceptible of translation or interpretation which the learned authors have made here. Nor, the whole Sikh history of Sikh doctrine lends any credence to the doctrine of ultimate and mutual exclusive dichotomy of the church and the state.[124]

The learned Sirdar then gives his version of the translation, which, in our view, reflects the correct sense of the original :

> Those of Baba (Nanak) and those of Babar,
> God Himself maketh them both.
> Know the former thus : as the King of Religion.

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Understand the latter thus : as the secular king.
They who fail to render that,
What is due to the (House of) Baba,
The minions of Babar seize them,
And make exactions upon them.
And inflict severe punishments, upon such defaulters.
In addition, their worldly goods and
property are looted and taken away.

The text nowhere says, explicitly or by implication, that the church and the state "both derive their authority from God Himself." It clearly says, "God maketh them both as the instruments of His Will." The word in the text *karé*, neither literally nor here can be interpreted to mean "authorised"; it simply means "made by" or "maketh". Similarly, the word "*pahchano*" is not in the sense of a commandment, "thou shalt recognise". It means, "know, identify, understand". "The House of Babé" means "the true religion on Earth", and the text says, "understand the term to mean thus as such". Likewise "*anumano*" cannot and does not mean "recognise and accept". It literally and here in the next stanza means, "understand, see, take it as, infer that the House of Babar means the secular state."[125]

Muazzam's departure from Lahore and his cowing down of hill rulers ended the Guru's anxiety and now he felt free to engage himself in peaceful pursuits. A phase of intense activity followed. He invited new entrants to his literary *darbar* already enriched with the return of the Sikhs who had been sent to Benares in 1686 CE.[126] He encouraged them to translate the relevant portions of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*[127] and several other literary works.

The Guru took care to impart cultural standard of his disciples. He exhorted them to attend *sangat*, and listen to and participate in *kirtan*. Anandpur Sahib fully reflected a new religio-social model. Every home was expected to function as *Guru ka langar*. Occasionally the Guru would conduct surprise checks to see how far it was being practised. One day early morning, as the story goes, disguised as a common pilgrim, he went round and discovered that food was not ready in most of the homes. Only Bhai Nand Lal passed this test : he welcomed the guest with beaming face and placed at his disposal whatever was available in the kitchen; butter, half-kneaded flour, half-cooked pulse and sundry vegetables. He then very humbly said, "This is ready and is all for you, but if you permit me, I will prepare them for you and serve you in the name of my Master." Next morning the Guru told everyone that there was but one *Guru ka langar* at Anandpur Sahib and that belonged to Bhai Nand Lal. The Guru's utterances were a sort of homily on *Guru ka langar*. The Guru said :

> If a hungry person calls at your door and you turn him away, remember that you are turning out not him but me. He who serves the poor and the needy serves me. The mouth of the poor is the *golak* of the Guru.[128]

Anandpur Sahib presented a spectacle of perfect harmony free from petty jealousies and parochialism. Here all castes, creeds and colours met in the joyous *sangat*. There is

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the story of a *kalal* come to see the Guru, but because of his profession (wine distilling, considered very low and unworthy in society) he would not dare join the *sangat* in the Guru's *darbar*. The Guru sensed his predicament, and led him to a seat close to him. He still pleaded that being a *kalal*, he was not entitled to the honour. The Guru said, "You are not *kalal*, but *Guru ka lal*."[129] His mission was to uplift such lowly people and to assure them that they were as dignified as anyone else in this world.

On another occasion, the Guru asked for a cup of water. A handsome lad, a scion of a rich feudal lord responded. His hands looked extremely delicate and clean. The Guru held the cup in his hand for a while, but then returned it to the young man without sipping, saying "My son, it seems your hands have never laboured in the service of the people." "No Sir, I have never worked with these hands as yet," the boy agreed. "Ah, my boy, go then and purify your hands first in the service of the people."[130] The Guru's priorities were very clear, that society based on caste should be discarded forthwith, and that it should be reorganised on basis of love for all, equal rights, divinity of individuals, dignity of labour and faith in the singularity and unicity of God with a commitment to improve the lot of the people.

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. Cunningham, J.D. : *History of the Sikhs*, p. 75.
2. Sukha Singh, Bhai : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1989, p. 34.
3. Randhir Singh, Bhai : *Gurparnalian*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1977, p. 199.
4. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : *Bansawali Nama*, Singh Brothers, p. 125.
5. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : *Guru kian Sakhian*, edited by Piara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1991.
6. Narang, G.C. : *Transformation of Sikhism*, reprint, Delhi, 1992.
7. Karam Singh : *Gurpurb Nirnay*, Amritsar, 1912, p. 172.
8. Refer to *hukamnama* of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur in the book *Hukamnamas* edited by Dr Fauja Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, p. 52.
9. The Sikh tradition has preserved the simple fact of Shiv Dutt's interest in Tegh Bahadur's family particularly the young son, in the form of a *Sakhi* in which Gobind appears as a divine spirit and Shiv Dutt as an adoring disciple. Kartar Singh : *Life of Sri Guru Gobind Singh*, Ludhiana, 1958, p. 23.
10. Ibid., p. 22.
11. Khazan Singh : *History of the Sikh Religion*, reprint, Bhasha Vibhag, Panjab, Patiala, 1977, p. 166.
    Sukha Singh : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, MS., Guru Ram Das Library, Amritsar.
    Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1967, p. 744.
12. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp. 755-59.
13. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi Khata Jalhanon Balaunton ka*. The evidence of this *Bhat Vahi* is confirmed by a contemporary Pehowa source which records the arrival of Mata Gujri at Pehowa *teerth* on 1727 BK (1670 CE). *Vahi Pandit Nil Kanth* son of Pandit Atma Ram Jyotishi, Pehowa *teerth*. *Bhat Vahi* records :
    "*Guru Gobind Das ji béta Guru Tegh Bahadur ji .....Lakhnaur aae, pargana Ambala, Sammat 1727 Asu 9 shukla pakhé, gail Mata Gujri ji aayé Mehal Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, Kirpal Chand, aayé béta Lal*

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Chand Subhiki ka, Sadhu Ram béta Dharmé Khosla ka, Chaupat Ram aaya béta Péré Chhibbar ka, Gawal Das aaya béta Chhoté Mal Chhibbar ka, Daswin ké dihon Guru Gobind Das ji manji té baithé Mamun Mehar Chand Subhiki béta Lal Chand ka né sir barna kiya, zamurdi rang ki pagh bandhai, Guru ki Karahi ki."

14. *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi Khata Jalhanon Balaunton ka.*
15. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., *Sakhi* no. 28, pp. 78-79.
16. Sri Guru Gobind Singh's name is found written in two ways, i.e., Gobind "Das" & Gobind "Rai", in various old manuscripts, while dealing with the period prior to 1699 CE. As in the sub-continental social tradition, existence of two suffixes is easily understood, we have retained use of both these suffixes.
17. *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind.* For corroboration refer to Sarup Singh Kaushish in *Guru kian Sakhian, Sakhi* no. 28, p. 79.
18. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., *Sakhi* no. 29, p. 80.
    Chhibbar, Kesar Singh : *Bansawali Nama, Nauwan Charan, Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi, Khata Jalhanon Balaunton ka.*
19. Dhillon, Balwant Singh : *Pramukh Sikh té Sikh Panth*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1997, pp. 131-33.
20. Grewal, J.S. and Bal, S.S. : *Sri Guru Gobind Singh*, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1967, p. 52.
21. *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, ed. Harbans Singh, Vol. I, p. 128.
    The foundation of Chak Nanaki (later Anandpur Sahib) was laid by Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur on June 19, 1665 CE, on a piece of land covering the ruined mound of an older village, Makhowal, which the Guru had earlier purchased from the Hindu hill state of Kahlur. After the battle of Bhangani (September, 1688 CE) Sri Guru Gobind Singh returned to Chak Nanaki which he now renamed Anandpur Sahib after one of the forts (Anandgarh) which he now undertook to raise. Rose, however, says that Anandpur Sahib was founded in 1678 CE, vide *The Land of the Five Rivers, Historical and Descriptive Sketches*, p. 213.
    The correct position seems to be that the piece of land had been acquired in 1665 CE but Nanaki Chak was given the new name when the Guru returned to this place after the battle of Bhangani.
22. According to Sikh tradition Rattan Chand of Assam came to Makhowal and met Gobind Rai in 1680 CE. Though the Sikh tradition has preserved the memory of only this chief coming to Makhowal others must have come too.
23. The Persian writers tell us that Aurangzeb wanted his *faujdars* on the north west to see that Sri Guru Gobind Singh stopped practices that created the impression that the Guru was a Sovereign. Khushwaqt Rai, *Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, S.H.R. 116, 632-33; *Suraj Parkash*, II, *Rut I, Ansu* 24, p. 2294; *Gurbilas* by Bhai Sukha Singh, p. 104.
24. Rose, H.A. : *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province*, III, p. 688. Rose puts Bhim Chand's defeat in 1682 CE.
25. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., p. 772.
26. Gupta, Hari Ram : *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 227, Mahohar, New Delhi, 1984.
27. Gian Singh, Giani : *Sri Dashmesh Chamatkar*, p. 119.
28. Hutchison, J. and Vogel, J.P.H. : *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Vol. II.
29. Gupta, Hari Ram : op. cit., p. 230.
30. Trilochan Singh : *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, Delhi, 1967, p. 114.
31. Sirmaur (later known as Nahan) was a mountainous tract with a steep rise from the north-west to the north-east with elevation of more than 11,000 feet at its hightest level. It was cut into two by Giri, a tributary of Jamuna.

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32. *Sirmaur State Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1907, p. 17.
"The Sikhs have four gurdwaras in the state at Paonta, Bhangani, Nahan. The fourth gurdwara is at Tokah, but it only consists of a small platform near a well, built by Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, when he held the Naraingarh *ilaqa* in the later part of the 19th century (Bikarmi). About 100 *bighas* in the state are attached to the gurdwara, and it also enjoys a *muafi* in Naraingarh *tehsil* and an annual grant of 100 *mans* of grain from Patiala. The income is appropriated by the descendants of the late *pujari*."
33. Sainapat : *Sri Gursobha*, p. 15.
Ketak Bars Bhat eih Bhail, Des Pawta Sat Guru Gaie,
Jamma Mahal Banwai Karat Anand Prabhu Man Bhai.
Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., pp. 16-17.
34. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol.V., pp. 16-17.
35. Grewal, J.S. and Bal, S.S. : op. cit., p. 71.
36. *Sirmaur Gazetteer*, p. 112, as cited by I.B. Banerjee in *Evolution of the Khalsa*, II, p. 69.
37. *Bachittar Natak*, Chapter 8, *Chaupai* 3.
38. Padam, Piara Singh : *Sri Guru Gobind Singh dé Darbari Rattan*, Patiala, 1974, pp. 4-6.
39. Ibid., pp. 25-32.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ashta, D.P. : *The Poetry of the Dasam Granth*, Arun Parkashak, Delhi, p. 79.
46. Gandhi, S.S. : *Struggle of the Sikhs for Sovereignty*, Gurdas Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1980, p. 571.
The veracity of the statement can be corroborated by examining the contents of most of the books produced in this period. Gulab Singh Nirmala, who was initiated into the classical learning by Sant Man Singh, wrote *Bhakha Vrit*, in 1777 CE; *Mokh Panth*, 1778 CE; *Adhyatam Ramayan*, 1782 CE; *Parbodh Chander Natak*, 1792 CE. The general tenor of these books is *vedantic*.
47. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V., p. 20.
48. Ganda Singh (ed.) : *Hukamnamé*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, p. 131.
49. Ibid., p. 17. A large number of *hukamnamas* were numbered. Besides they were written in a specific form, as for instance on each *hukamnama* there is the Guru's sign or instruction in the Guru's hand to be followed in the content of the *hukamnama* to be scribed by a scribe who would start his writing with :
ੴ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿ (*Ik Onkar Guru Sat*), or ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ (*Ik Onkar Satguru*) *or* ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀਉ (*Ik Onkar Satguru Jio*).
50. Different dates regarding the war are given by different scholars. We have based our conclusion on the versions given in typed copy of *Bhat Vahis* (now reserved in Punjabi University, Patiala), and *Bansawali Nama* by Kesar Singh Chhibbar, edited by Rattan Singh Jaggi, *PARAKH*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1972, p. 124; *Shaheed Bilas* by Sewa Singh.
We have rejected the dates given by Bhai Santokh Singh and *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin* by Sukha Singh. Bhai Santokh Singh writes that the battle was fought in 1686 CE, while according to Bhai Sukha Singh it was fought sometime between 1686 CE and 1689 CE. *Mahan Kosh* fixes the date as April 16, 1686 CE.
51. Diwan Nand Chand was the son of Suraj Mal.

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52. Gian Singh, Giani : *Panth Parkash*, reprint, Amritsar, 1973, pp. 1419-20.
53. *Dehradun Gazetteer*, p. 171.
54. The territory gained by the Sirmaur *raja* included Shergarh Kalsi, and the fort of Boorat.
55. *Sirmaur State Gazetteer*, p. 14.
56. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., p. 14.
59. Sarkar, J.N. : *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, pp. 563-65.
60. Ibid.
61. Grewal, J.S. and Bal, S.S. : op. cit., p. 71. *Sirmaur State Gazetteer*, p. 15. Jog Raj was the son of Budh Parkash who was the son of Subhag Parkash.
62. The Sikh tradition very significantly preserved the memory of both Fateh Shah and Medini Parkash visiting the Guru regularly. Sometimes they would visit the Guru at the same time and accompany the Guru for *shikar* in the jungles around Paonta. *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, p. 120.
63. Prithvi Shah and Fateh Shah appear to have had considerable faith in the spiritual power of Ram Rai. This is clearly indicated by Prithvi Shah's settling down Ram Rai at Khanabad and allowing him to build it as the nucleus of Dehradun and Fateh Shah confirming the possession of several villages for the support of *mahant's* retinue, besides allowing him to build a small centre at Srinagar itself. *Dehradun Gazetteer*, p. 172.
64. Gupta, Hari Ram : op. cit., p. 236.
According to Dr Hari Ram Gupta, they were Fateh Shah of Garhwal, Bhim Chand of Kahlur, Kirpal Chand of Kangra, Sidh Sen of Mandi, Gopal Chand of Guler, Hari Chand of Hindur, Kesri Chand of Jaswal, Umed Chand of Jaswan, Dayal Chand of Kotgarh, Karam Chand of Bharmour, Daya Singh of Nurpur, Gurbhaj Singh of Indaurah, Bagh Singh of Talokpur, Hari Chand of Kotiwal, Lachhu Chand of Kot Khari.
65. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 30-34, 40.
66. *Bachittar Natak*, VIII, p. 15.
67. Ibid., p. 20. According to Sainapat, Fateh Shah had so much confidence in his generals and soldiers that he expected a walkover in the battle.
68. *Bachittar Natak*, VIII, p. 20.
69. Ibid., p. 25. Macauliffe translates it as :
"Hari Chand in his rage drew forth his arrow. He struck my head with one and discharged another at me. God preserved me and it only grazed my ear in its flight. His third arrow penetrated the buckle of my waist belt and reached my body but wounded not. It is only God who protected me knowing me His servant. When I felt the touch of the arrow, my anger was kindled. I took up my bow and began to discharge arrows in abundance. Upon this, my adversaries began to flee. I took the aim and killed the young chief." (Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 44.)
70. *Bachittar Natak* : "God in His grace bestowed victory on me."
71. *Gazetteer of Himachal Pardesh, Sirmaur*, 1969, p. 55.
72. Kahn Singh, Bhai : *Mahan Kosh*.
73. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 102.
74. Ibid., pp. 102-3.
75. Kartar Singh : *Sri Guru Gobind Singh*, Ludhiana, 1958, p. 189. Macauliffe calls the place 'Lakanpur' which is wrong.
76. Ibid.

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77. Ibid.
78. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., pp. 102-03.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Hutchison, J. and Vogel, J.P.H. : *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Vol. I, pp. 388, 462, 582. *Mandi State Gazetteer*, p. 37.
82. Ibid., pp. 149-50, 225, 226.
83. Ibid., pp. 205, 309.
84. *Journal of Indian History*, pp. xxxi-ii, 140, 142, as cited by B.N. Goswamy in *Social Background of Kangra Valley Painting*.
85. *Bachittar Natak*, IX, p. 2.
86. Ibid., I.
87. Ibid., IX, p. 2.
88. Grewal, J.S. and Bal, S.S. : op. cit., p. 87.
89. Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., Vol. II, p. 81 and Appendix A.
Following the *Gurbilas*, I.B. Banerjee rightly calls him the *raja* of Jaswal. This gets confirmation from the name Ram Singh appearing in the list of the *Rajas of Jaswal* given by Hutchison and Vogel.
90. According to I B. Banerjee he was the chief of Mudhwar, a hill state in the Jammu group. According to Hutchison and Vogel, the later chiefs of Datarpur bore the titles of Dadwal. We feel that he was more likely to be the chief of Datarpur. See *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Vol. I, p. 212.
91. *Bachittar Natak*, IX, p. 3.
92. Ibid., p. 6.
93. Ibid., p. 16.
Rose, H.A. : op. cit., Vol. III, p. 156. *Nanglu* is a sect of Rajputs descended from Chua Mian son of Sagar Chand, the sixth *raja* of Kahlur. Possibly the *Panglu* also is another Rajput sect of the type.
Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., II, p. 82. It appears that Guler also supported Bhim Chand and this is confirmed by *Gurbilas*, VII, p. 41. It seems that the reference is to the clans of Jaswal and Guleria and not to the states of those names. Guleria and Jaswal were two of the six clans of Katoch.
94. Ibid., pp. 18-20.
95. Ibid., p. 22.
96. Ibid., p. 23.
97. Ibid.
98. Grewal, J.S. and Bal, S.S. : op. cit., p. 91.
99. Ibid., p. 96.
100. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, Royal Asiatic Society, Calcutta. An extract of the newsletter runs as follows :
"News from Sirhind — Gobind declares himself to be Guru Nanak. *Faujdars* ordered to prevent him from assembling (his Sikhs)." Quoted by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh in *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 65.
101. Narang, Gokal Chand : *Transformation of Sikhism*, reprint, 1989, p. 90. He was the governor of Kangra. *Panth Parkash* calls him the governor of Kashmir. *Suraj Parkash* calls him *Panj Hazari Sardar*. Indu Bhushan Banerjee considers him only a Mughal Officer.

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Macauliffe : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 55. He attained power in Punjab during the insurrection, which arose while Aurangzeb was away to Deccan.

102. Sunder Singh : *Battles of Sri Guru Gobind Singh*. Alam Khan was the Guru's *deoridar*.
I.B. Banerjee : He was the Guru's attendent. Vide reference *Evolution of the Khalsa II*, p. 85.
Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 835. Calls him Alam Shah.

103. *Bachittar Natak*, X, p. 6.

104. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

105. Ibid., XI, p. 8.

106. The amount was exorbitant even if he was expected to share the burden with his friend, the *raja* of Jaswan. It must be compared with the annual tribute that they paid to the Mughal government which did not exceed a few hundred rupees for either Guler or Jaswan.
For the amount demanded, see *Bachittar Natak*, XI, p. 13.
For the annual tribute by the three *rajas* to the Mughal government, see Goswami, B.N. : op. cit., pp. 57-58.

107. *Bachittar Natak*, XI, p. 57.

108. Ibid, XIII, p. 69.

109. Ibid.

110. Gupta, Hari Ram : op. cit., Vol. I, p. 242. Jujhar Singh was a certain Rajput prince whom Aurangzeb despatched from the Deccan. Chandan Rai was the deputy of Jujhar Singh.

111. Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., II, 86.

112. This name is mentioned in *Bachittar Natak*. He was the in-charge of Jaswan contingent, certainly not the ruler of Jaswan state who was Ram Singh.

113. *Bachittar Natak*, Section XII, *Chaupai*, 1-12.

114. Ibid., XIII, I, *Sahzadah ko aghan madar des.*
Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., *Rut* II, *Ansu* 48.

115. Irvine : *Later Mughals*, pp. 1-4.

116. Refer to Khafi Khan's account in Elliot and Dowson, Volume VII, p. 153.

117. *Bachittar Natak*, XIII, *Chaupais* 9-25.

118. Ganda Singh : *Hukamnamé*, Punjabi University Publication, 1967, *hukamnamas* 35, 37.
The statement is amply supported by different *hukamnamas*. One of these letters is to the progenitors of the Phulkian house in which the Guru asks for assistance. In another *hukamnama* addressed to the *sangat* of Dhaka the Guru acknowledges the receipt of swords, clothes, and money and asks for more. Still in another letter he asks for good war elephants.

119. *Hukamnama* dated August 2, 1696 CE (2 *Bhadon Sammat* 1753 BK) to Bhai Tiloka and Rama and the entire congregation under them to come to him with a force. For English translation see *Patiala and East Punjab Historical Background*, p. 44.

120. Ganda Singh : op. cit., *hukamnama* no. 43, p. 147; and *hukamnama* no. 42, p. 145.

121. Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., II, p. 116; Johar, S.S. : *Sri Guru Gobind Singh*, 1967.

122. According to *Gurbilas*, this was due to the pleas of Nand Lal 'Goya', who was sympathetic to the Sikhs and was in the employ of the prince. Also refer to Banerjee, I.B. : op. cit., II, p. 116.

123. *Bachittar Natak*, XIII, 9.
Babé ké Babar ké dou
Ap karé Parmesar sé aou
Din sham un ko pehchano
Dunipat un ko anumano
Jo Babé ké dam na dé hai

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Tin té gaih Babar ké lé hei.

124. Kapur Singh, Sirdar : *Prasarprasna*, pp. 197-98, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989.
125. Ibid., pp. 197-99.
126. These later formed the nucleus of *Nirmal Panth.* They returned to Anandpur Sahib on 1692 CE according to Dr S.S. Bal, and 1697 CE according to Khazan Singh. We consider Bal's date as the correct one because there is a strong tradition that they lived at Benares for seven years.
127. We observe some of the most talented poets in Sri Guru Gobind Singh's *darbar* now beginning to translate portions of *Mahabharata.* It is difficult to say if something similar was done about *Ramayana*, but in all probability some poets did translations of *Ramayana* in this period. See Bhai Vir Singh's tract *Sri Guru Gobind Singh da Vidya Darbar.*
128. Bhandari, Sujan Rai : *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh*, Punjabi trans., Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 81. That the Sikhs considered it their religious duty to feed and serve all who called at their door is confirmed by the testimony of Munshi Sujan Rai of Batala, who began his book, *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh* in 1695-96 CE and finished it in 1697-98 CE, or a year or two before the consecration of the Khalsa.
"If a person turns up at their door at mid-night and calls in the name of Baba Nanak, though he may be stranger or even a thief, robber or scoundrel, they serve him according to his need, as they serve a brother and a friend."
129. Puran Singh : *Ten Masters*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, p. 102.
It was believed that merely stepping on the bone of a dead *Kalal* would condemn one to the fires of hell.
130. Vir Singh : *Kalghidhar Chamatkar.* Puran Singh : op. cit., p. 102.

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14

NANAK X
— EMERGENCE OF THE KHALSA —

The emergence of the Khalsa was the logical outcome of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's blueprint. In order to put this unique event in its proper historical perspective we need to understand the prevailing political scenario.

The Mughal state had assumed the form of a purely Islamic state under Aurangzeb. Earlier, especially in the times of Babar, Humayun, and Akbar, the rule could be categorised as largely Islamic, but not totally Islamic. Babar and his son were no religious bigots. Similarly, Akbar's religious propensities were those of liberal Muslims. He found no difficulty in reaching an understanding with the Hindu Rajputs, and did not hesitate to set his face against religious orthodoxy. He strove to construct bridges of understanding between the two main religious communities of India, viz., Hindu and Muslim. His order, *Din-i-Ilahi*, was an association of liberal-minded persons. He did not levy discriminatory taxes such as *jazia* on non-Muslims, nor did he pass laws unfavourable to them. He did not interfere in religious affairs of any community. He was empathetic even to Christianity and extended his patronage to the Christian missionaries. Jehangir, except for a few years in his early career when he, under the influence of the *Naqshbandis*, ordered Sri Guru Arjun Dev's execution, followed by and large a liberal religious policy and did not allow state power to serve the cause of Islam exclusively and blatantly. Shahjahan was comparatively less liberal and took measures which buttressed the cause of orthodoxy, but even in his period the state could not be designated as an Islamic state. In Aurangzeb's time, the state became entiraly Islamic as orthodoxy was adopted as an the imperial policy.

J.N. Sarkar while explicating the nature of the Muslim state, says that in Islam :

> The true king is God and earthly rulers are merely His agents, bound to enforce His law on land. Civil law is completely subordinated to religious law and, indeed, merges its existence in the latter. The civil authority exists solely to spread and enforce the true faith. In such a state, infidelity is logically equivalent to treason because the infidel repudiates the authority of the true king and pays homage to his rivals the false gods and goddesses... ... Therefore, the toleration of any sect outside the fold of orthodox Islam, is no better than compounding with sin. And the worst form of sin

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is polytheism, the belief that the one true god has partners in the form of other deities.[1] Such a belief is the rankest ingratitude (*kufr*).[2] Islamic theology, therefore, tells the true believer that his highest duty is to make exertions in the path of God by waging war (*jihad*) against infidel laws (*dar-ul-Harb*) till they become a part of the realm of Islam (*dar-ul-Islam*) and their populations are converted into true believers. After conquest the entire infidel population becomes theoretically reduced to the status of slaves of the conquering army.... The conversion of the entire population to Islam and the extinction of every form of dissent is the ideal of Muslim state. If any infidel is suffered to exist in the community, it is as a necessary evil and for transitional period only. Political and social disability must be imposed upon him and bribes offered to him from the public funds to hasten the day of his spiritual enlightenment and addition of his name to the role of true believers.... A true Islamic king is bound to look on jubilantly when his infidel subjects cut each other's throats, for whichever side may be slain, Islam is the gainer.[3]

Aurangzeb after ascending the throne hastened to convince the orthodox Muslims in the empire of their having backed the right horse. He began with puritanic measures. In the second year of his reign, he discontinued the celebration of *Nauroz* (first day of the lunar year). A few years later music and dancing were prohibited. *Jharokha darshan* was discontinued on the ground that it smacked of human worship. Severe punishments were awarded for anything that was construed by the theologians as violating the spirit of Islam. Permissible length of the beard was fixed at four fingers and offenders against this order were penalised.

Most of these restrictions were of a general nature and covered all communities. Non-Muslims were singled out for discriminatory treatment in four specific fields : public services, construction and repair of temples, conversion, and taxation. Regarding the discrimination of the government towards the Hindus in services, the remarks of Sri Ram Sharma seem pertinent. He says that towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign there was a small number of Hindus occupying the *mansabs* of 1000 and above than the number of similar *mansabdars* towards the end of Shahjahan's reign. But the decrease in number becomes still more significant when we take into account the increase in the total number of *mansabdars* which rose enormously in the reign of Aurangzeb. In 1657 CE under Shahjahan there were 8000 *mansabdars* in all whereas in 1690 CE the number of *mansabadars* had risen to 14556.... The percentage of Hindus in the higher ranks of the state services could not have been more than 50 per cent of what it was towards the end of Shahjahan's reign.[4] Besides this a carefully planned campaign was launched prohibiting the construction and repair of temples. In April 1669 CE, he issued a general order for the destruction of all schools and temples of Hindus. "Orders were now sent to the governors of all the provinces that they should destroy the schools and temples of the infidels and put an end to their educational activities as well as the places of the religion of *kafirs*."[5] In 1669 CE the temple of Vishwanath at Benares and Keshwanath at Mathura were demolished. The temple of Gopinath in Benares, too, was destroyed about the same time. Similar destructions were ordered in the various

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Rajput states, such as Ajmer, Ujjain, Bengal and other provinces of the Empire.

Mirza Inayatullah tells us in the *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri* that in compliance with the orders of the emperor, and with the consent of the local *qazi*, the Sikh temples in the town of Burya in the *paragana* of Khizrabad of the *sarkar* of Sirhind had been demolished and a mosque raised on its site.[6] Sayyed Zafar Darvesh was appointed incharge of that mosque to guide prayers and benedictions. Some Sikhs attacked the mosque and killed the *darvesh*. The emperor rebuked the *qazi* and his father who was the head of the police. According to Dr Hari Ram Gupta, this sort of incidents had become a common occurrence.[7]

In the field of taxation, the policy of discrimination was launched with great vigour. *Jazia* and pilgrimage taxes were relevied, custom duties on the Muslims were fixed 2.5% and in the case of the Hindus at 5%. It was ordered that in the lunar year the Muslims should pay 2.5% and the Hindus 5% on the price of their cattle.

Islam being a missionary religion and the ruling Muslim community being in a minority, great importance was attached to conversion. Bakhtawar Khan states that Aurangzeb himself administered *kalima* to prominent persons and adorned them with *khilat* with his own hands.[8] In March 1695 CE, all the Hindus, except Rajputs, were ordered not to ride elephants, fine horses and palanquins or to carry arms.[9]

Aurangzeb was equally bigoted towards Shias, Sufi saints, and liberal-minded Muslims. In 1661 CE, Mansur-e-Sani Sufi Muhammad Sarmad was beheaded for believing in Sufi principles.[10]

In 1678 CE, Diwan Muhammad Tahir was put to death for liberal interpretation of Islam.[11] Qamir, a famous theologian and a scholar of Sirhind, was hanged on the same charge. In 1683 CE, Mir Husain was executed in Kashmir in a tribal territory for breaking *Ramazan* fast a little before sunset.[12] In 1669 CE, celebration of *Moharram* was banned. Many Shia Imams were executed.[13]

This policy of Aurangzeb had manifold implications, one of which was that *mansabdars* taking cue from Aurangzeb became highly zealous and vigorous in their dealings with the non-Muslims. They saw in this the fulfilment of their financial needs and greed, apart from dislodging the non-Muslims from land they had occupied, to be made available to the state to distribute among Muslims.

With these goings on in the background, the tenth Guru had in front of him the disintegrative forces that had been brewing in Sikh society and had the potential to disturb its internal organisation. The *masands / manjidars*, who together with *sangats* under their respective charges constituted the pivot of Sikh organisation and had served Sikhism creditably since the time of its inception, had ceased to function appropriately. Up to the time of Sri Guru Hargobind, Sikhism had crossed frontiers of the Punjab and had won converts in far off regions such as Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, certain parts of south India, Jammu and Kashmir, etc. As a result, *sangats* had been formed on a large scale sometimes by the Sikhs themselves and sometimes by the *masands / manjidars* deputed by different Gurus. These *sangats* largely were connected to the Guru through *masands* and their deputies (*mewaras*) although instances of *sangats*

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being guided and supervised by devoted Sikhs were not lacking. *Masands*, therefore, acquired a lot of influence over the *sangats*, as they were the medium through whom instructions of the Guru were transmitted to the people. The offerings of the people were also collected and then remitted to the Guru by the *masands*, although, at times, the *sangats* sent them directly. The *masands* kept a part of the offerings for performing their organisational and temporal duties. The system worked well for sometime, but as the time passed, its functioning became shoddy and remiss. The office of a *masand*, which in the first instance was filled by men of piety and integrity, became hereditary in the families of the first incumbents, and in course of time, fell into the hands of those persons who were neither serious about their episcopal duties, nor possessed the requisite integrity in respect of financial matters. *Masands* not only took to jobbery and misappropriation of the offerings on a large scale, but also claimed status equal to that of the Guru, and did not hesitate to even hijack the *sangats*. Still they could not do much harm either to the solidarity of the Sikhs or the advance of Sikhism, because they feared Sri Guru Hargobind for his promptitude to take quick and strong actions.

After Sri Guru Hargobind, because of strained relations between the state and the Sikh Gurus and the challenges of claimants like Dhir Mal, Ram Rai and their successors to guruship, *masands* / *manjidars* found opportunities to be audaciously active in pursuing their petty designs instead of serving the cause of Sikhism. This tendency was clearly manifest during the pontificates of Sri Guru Har Rai and Sri Guru Harkrishan. It persisted even during Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's time. The fact that quite a number of them sided with Dhir Mal and one of them, named Sihan, did not hesitate even to fire at the ninth Guru, was a brazen example of *masands'* contumacy and their recalcitrance.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh had chartered a massive programme of rejuvenating and reshaping the society, and in the process he had realised that he would have to face animosity of the hill *rajas*, conservative Hindu elements, ignorant masses, Mughal Islamic imperialism, privileged classes, dissentient sects and his rival claimants to guruship. To steer clear through all this, he needed unflinching devotion of the Sikhs in general and whole-hearted cooperation of the *masands* in particular, but the latter failed him utterly. They adopted many tactics to deflect him from his chosen path. They bred doubts in the minds of his family members, and the Sikhs in general, regarding the soundness of his programmes and policies. When the Guru imparted military training and adopted assertive postures vis-a-vis hill *rajas*, they would at once go to the revered mother of the Guru to prevail upon her to actively intervene and to dissuade the Guru from such activities. Similarly, when the Guru decided to encounter the enemy at Bhangani, they were cynically critical. Not only this, they inveigled dissentients and rival claimants to the guruship to step up their nefarious activities. Many of them openly sided with them against the interest of the Guru. They also involved the *sangats* under their influence in the issues they championed and sponsored. Resultantly, *masands* and the *sangats* coalesced into different groups, each group under some *masand* / *manjidar* committed to some cause other than the cause of Sikhism.

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Many of the *masands* were bold enough to keep the offerings and *daswandh* with themselves, which they were enjoined upon to remit to the Guru. These were the people who took away the offerings which the Sikhs had made to the Guru at Anandpur Sahib, when there was cataclysm caused by the attack of Mirza Gias Beg and four Mughal *Ahadyas*. Such people wielded a considerable influence in the whole of Majha territory and most of the Doaba. They seemed to have cooperated in many cases with schismatic groups among the Sikhs. An indeterminate number of Sikhs were following the members of the Guru's descendants who had set up rival Guru lineages, notably the descendants of Pirthi Chand and Dhir Mal. Ram Rai had also attracted considerable following contemptuously called Ram Raiyas, but his strength was confined to the hills where Aurangzeb had granted him the territory of Dehradun.

Sikh chronicles are replete with examples of *masands'* utter perversity. It is said that one day a company of mimes came to the Guru's court. The Guru asked them to imitate *masands*. "One of them accordingly dressed as *masand*, second as *masand's* servant and a third as a *masand's* courtesan riding behind him on horseback as he went to collect offerings for the Guru. The mimes portrayed to highlight the villainies and oppression practised by the *masands*." Again we are told that a *masand* "billeted himself on a poor Sikh and claimed sweets instead of the crushed pulse and unleavened bread which formed the staple food of the host. The *masand* took the bread, threw it into the host's face and dashed the crushed pulse on the ground. He then abused the Sikh and would not cease scolding him till the poor Sikh sold his wife's petty-coat to provide him sweets."[14] The stories might not be wholly true but the substantial truth implicit in them is certified by the Guru himself. He writes :

> If anyone goes to the *masands*, they will tell him to bring all his property at once and give it to them. If anyone serves the *masands*, they will say 'Fateh and give us all thine offerings, go at once and make a present to us of whatever property is in your house.' Think on us night and day, and mention not others even by mistake. If they hear of anyone giving, they run to him even at night, they are not at all pleased at not receiving. They put oil into their eyes and make believe that they are shedding tears. If they see any of their worshippers wealthy, they serve him with sacred food and feed him with it. If they see him without wealth, they give him nothing, though he begs for it, they will not show him their faces. Those beasts plunder men, and never sing the praises of the Supreme Being.[15]

The *masands* had become hypocritical, avaricious, ego-centred, dishonest, and were engaged in creating their own followings to cater to their own selfish ends instead of linking the Sikhs to the Guru. These acts were sternly taken notice of by the sixth Nanak and he designated the Sikhs who had direct link with the Guru as *Khalsa* or "the Guru's own",[16] the term having its origin in Persian where those lands were called "Khalsa lands", which were under the direct control of the sovereign.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh's perception about the *masands* was no different from his father and grandfather, but he waited long before he took any decisive step against them. The Guru's slow peddling in this regard seems to have been actuated by practical

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considerations, as for instance, any drastic interference in their affairs would have put the whole Sikh organisation out of gear. Ultimately the Guru did take action. He exposed the misdeeds of the *masands* and issued *hukamnamas* to the various *sangats* that they should not only stop sending their offerings and the amount of *daswandh* through the *masands*, but also avoid having any social relations with them. They were asked to have direct link with the Guru. Offerings should be sent directly to him or through his specially appointed emissaries.[17]

The Guru denounced the Minas, Dhir Mallias and Ram Raiyas as heretics, projecting beliefs and opinions opposed to Sikhism. *Hukamnamas* to the Sikhs not to have any social relationship with the followers of Pirthi Chand, Dhir Mal and Ram Rai were also issued.[18]

There is evidence to show that the *masands* had actually turned authoritarian and used to indulge in corrupt practices that led to the exploitation of the poor, credulous Sikhs. All this convulsed the mind of the Guru and he seemed to have given a serious thought to it.

The Guru, whether he was at Anandpur Sahib or at Paonta or any other place, was persistent in his efforts to create that ultimate instrument, which would help him achieve his objective. He followed the path shown by his predecessors, which was indeed a primary impulsion, epitomizing what Sikhism stood for in terms of doctrine, society, individual and corporate living, and ultimate destiny of the creation at universal level. The praxis was the Khalsa.

The Guru decided to put his plan into operation on the first of *Vaisakh* 1756 BK (March 29, 1699 CE). He sent *hukamnamas* to his followers inviting them to visit Anandpur Sahib in full strength on the *Vaisakhi* festival.

The Sikhs responded by gathering in very large numbers at Anandpur Sahib on the day of the festival, March 29, 1699 CE.[19] Sri Guru Gobind rose early and sat in meditation. He then appeared before the *sangat* who hailed him with shouts of greetings. Bhai Mani Singh gave exposition of a *shabad* from *Adi Granth*.[20] Sri Guru Gobind Singh then stood before the assembly with his sword unsheathed and spoke, "Is there anyone here who would lay down his life for his Guru and *dharam*." It was an amazing call, and no wonder, his words struck confusion among the gathering. They did not know what the Guru meant and gazed in awed silence until he spoke again. Now confusion turned into fear. For the third time, Sri Guru Gobind Singh repeated his call. Daya Ram, a Sikh of Lahore, rose and said in utter humility, "My head is at thy disposal, my True Lord. There would be no greater gain than dying under thy sword." He walked with the Guru to a specially improvised enclosure close by. The Guru returned with his sword dripping blood, and waving it to the multitude asked for another head. This was more than anyone could endure. People started leaving the place. Some of them went to complain to the Guru's mother. But a Sikh from Delhi, Dharam Das, came forward to offer himself for sacrifice for the Guru. He, too, was taken to the enclosure. In the same way the Guru made three more calls. Mokham Chand, a Sikh from Dwarika, Himmat, a Sikh from Jagannath, and Sahib Chand, a

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Sikh from Bidar cheerfully responded one after another and advanced to offer their heads.

A while after, the Guru led the five Sikhs back from the enclosure into which he had taken them one by one. In the enclosure confidentially guarded, he had kept sets of apparel especially designed for the occasion. Decked in saffron-coloured gorgeous outfits topped over with neatly tied turbans of the same colour, the glorious five walked deferentially behind the Master, overwhelmed with gratitude. The Guru was himself attired in the same manner as his chosen disciples.

> The gathering considerably thinned and still in shocked muteness was further puzzled to see those whom they had thought to have been sacrificed to the Guru's whim re-appear in flesh and blood.[21]

The Guru took water in an iron bowl, stirred it with a *khanda* (double-edged sword) to the recitation of *bani*. Mata Jito brought a plate full of *patasas* and with the approval of the Guru put them into the water. *Amrit*, the nectar of Immortality, was now ready.

The nectar thus prepared was administered to the five beloved from the same bowl to signify their initiation into the casteless fraternity of the Khalsa. All five of them were given the steel bowl to quaff from it turn by turn the *amrit* in token of having become brothers. The most striking thing in the process of the *amrit*-initiation was that henceforth the Khalsa would follow the ideal of self-assertion and self-reliance alongwith the ideal of humility and self-surrender. The initiation symbolised a rebirth by which the initiated were considered as having renounced : their caste — *dharam nash*; their hereditary occupation — *kirt nash*; their lineage — *kul nash*; their superstitious beliefs — *bharam nash*; and their previous type of rituals — *karam nash*; to feel unencumbered to tread the path shown by the Guru. The moment marked their complete break with the past. The initiated males and females were enjoined to put *Singh* (lion) and *Kaur* (prince), respectively, as suffix along with their names.

The initiation of the double-edged sword, introduced on the day of the creation of the Khalsa, required the initiate to live a virtuous life of morally responsible action under the discipline and code especially prescribed for him. For outward symbols, the Guru asked them to always wear unshorn hair (*kesh*), a comb (*kangha*) in the hair knot, an iron bangle (*kara*) on the right wrist, a sword (*kirpan*) on his person and *kachha* (a pair of short breeches). These five Ks (*kesh*, *kangha*, *kara*, *kirpan*, *kachh*) are not mere external symbols.[22] A single and pervasive leitmotif is discernible in these marks of investiture on the personality of an initiated Sikh (Khalsa), and this can be characterised as a sense of preparedness to uphold the ideals which the Guru had pin-pointed. These symbols, the decision for which was announced more through profound deliberations and mystically intuited wisdom, gave the Sikhs their form, and are symbolic of their conduct. The hair, which the Sikhs maintain as a command of their Guru, imprint on the wearer the investiture of spirituality. It is against this background that Professor Puran Singh calls hair "a dear remembrance, an heirloom, a trust, a pledge, a love, a vow, an inspiration." Sri Guru Gobind Singh calls hair the seal of the Guru in one of

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his *hukamnamas*. They also seem to symbolize countermanding of renunciatory practices — the material world and asceticism are symbolized among certain cults by tricho-depilatory rituals.

The *kara* was necessarily made of iron and of no other metal. The Guru called the Supreme Reality *Sarb-Loh*, "All steel". The *kara*, therefore, was a constant reminder to the initiated Sikhs never to lose sight of this attribute of God as well.

The *kirpan* is a synthesis of two words '*kirpa*' (compassion or kindness) and '*aan*' (honour), which signify and highlight the purpose for which it is to be used. In Sikh religious parlance the word conveys two dimensional meaning. First, *Bhagauti* (Sword) is an attributive name of the Almighty. Thus, the wearer feels that he / she is ever under the protection of *Bhagauti*. Second, and which is in fact a derivative of the first, it symbolises manifestation of *shakti* or divine power, which is to be used in favour of the righteous against the unrighteous as a last resort when all other means fail.

The sword of the Khalsa was never a symbol of aggression, and it was never used for self-aggrandisement. It stands for defence of righteousness, truth and virtue.[23] The sword is considered synonymous with God, the Primal generative principle, the supreme power to sustain moral order and to annihilate negative forces. In this way, the Guru conveyed to the Khalsa, as an individual as well as a corporate body, that they, as wielders of the sword, should cast themselves in the mould of God, with all these attributes. Unlike a dagger, which is associated with secret attack, the sword is associated with open combat, governed by certain ethical principles. Thus, the sword of the Khalsa is the assertion of this right to freedom. To quote Kapur Singh :

> (The Sword) is by ancient tradition and association, a typical weapon of offence and defence, and hence a fundamental right to wear, of the free man and woman, a sovereign individual. All governments and rulers, whether ancient or modern, have and do insist to wear arms. Indeed in final analysis, a government or the state is sustained and supported by the organised might and exclusive right of possession of arms, a citizen's right to wear arms being conceded as only of a permissive and licensed character. It follows from this that the measure of freedom to possess and wear arms by an individual is the precise measure of his freedom and sovereignty. Since a member of the Khalsa brotherhood is pledged not to accept any alien restrictions on his / her civic freedom, he / she is enjoined upon to insist on and struggle for his or her unrestricted right to wear and possess arms of offence and defence.[24]

The Sikh stress on physical cleanliness along with inner purity warrants that the hair should be kept clean and tidy, which makes the *kangha* or the comb indispensable. As a divestural symbol it appears to repudiate the practice of *tantric yogis*, the outward symbol of whose denomination is matted hair (*jata*). The last of the five Ks, the *kachhehra* or *kachha*, is an integral part of bodily hygiene. It also symbolises a Sikh's commitment to use restraint in his / her sexual activities.

The five symbols taken together signify that the Khalsa, both as individual and a corporate body, should be strong in body, mind and soul, and develop an integrated personality. They not only give a splendid bearing to the Sikhs, but also a distinct

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identity. They also make it impossible for them to conceal their identity as some Sikhs at Delhi had done at the time of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution in November 1675 CE. Further, they gave the Sikhs a distinctive appearance, different both from that of the Hindus and the Muslims — the fact which imparted a semblance of unity, close brotherhood, equality and group consciousness. To quote from a report of the proceedings :

> Though several refused to accept the Guru's religion, about twenty thousand men stood up and promised to obey him as they had the fullest faith in the divine message.[25]

The novitiates came forward in batches to be initiated. The first five among those who now volunteered were Ram Singh, Desa Singh, Tahal Singh, Ishar Singh and Fateh Singh. They were called by the Guru *punj mukté*, the five liberated ones.[26] According to *Guru kian Sakhian*, in the next row stood Mani Ram, Bachittar Das, Ude Rai, Anik Das, Ajaib Das, Ajaib Chand, Chaupat Rai, Divan Dharam Chand, Alam Chand Nachna and Sahib Ram Koer followed by Rai Chand Multani, Gurbakhsh Rai. Pandit Kirpa Ram Dutt of Mattan, Subeg Chand, Gurmukh Das, Sanmukh Das, Amrik Chand, Purohit Daya Ram, Barna, Ghani Das, Lal Chand Peshuria, Rup Chand, Sodhi Dip Chand, Nand Chand, Nanu Rai of Dilwali and Hazari, Phandari and Darbari of Sirhind came next. Countless more batches came, each one more eager than the other. Anandpur Sahib was seized with an uncann fervour of the spirit.[27]

According to one estimate as many as 80,000 Sikhs were initiated in a few days. The Guru called them the Khalsa, the pure and his very own ideal — *Isht Suhird.* The Guru also sent instructions that those who called themselves Sikhs should get themselves initiated. The initiated Sikhs were termed as Khalsa.[28]

In addition to the five emblems, the initiated were to observe a certain code of conduct, *Rehat.* They were not to i) cut their hair on any part of their body; ii) smoke, chew tobacco or take alcoholic drinks; iii) eat meat of an animal slaughtered by any 'purifying method', like *halaal* of Muslims and *kosher* of Jews; iv) violate the modesty of women of even the enemy.[29]

The more remarkable aspect of this episode was that the Guru having administered *amrit* to the five Sikhs stood up in supplication, and with folded hands requested them to initiate him in the manner he had initiated them. They were amazed at such a strange request, but he silenced them by saying that he too wanted to be one of them. The Five Beloved initiated the Guru to the order of the Khalsa according to the new rite. After this, there remained no difference between the initiated Sikhs and the Guru. They were to be his Khalsa, the body of his body and the soul of his soul, nay his otherself, his beloved ideal. The Guru, thus, merged himself in the Khalsa, and the whole body of the Khalsa was invested with the dignity of guruship. Thenceforward the principle was established that five chosen Sikhs could represent the Khalsa. The Guru also sent instructions that those who called themselves Sikhs should receive the new initiation.

The initiated Sikhs, were termed as the *Khalsa.*[30] The term was not without a precedent. In the pre-Khalsa period, the term Khalsa was restricted to such privileged

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Sikhs as were virtually directly connected with the Gurus and whose subordination to the *masands* was simply *de jure*. "The word *Khalsa* in the sense of the privileged Sikhs occurs in a *hukamnama* (fiat) issued by Sri Guru Hargobind and also in one issued by Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur."[31] But with Sri Guru Gobind Singh any one who is initiated by the *amrit* ceremony, who abides by the instructions of the Guru, was the member of the Khalsa or Sikh Brotherhood.

Apart from wearing five emblems and observing calls of conduct, the Sikhs were expected not to pay homage to any external object except the *Granth*, not to recognise caste prejudices, superstitions, empty rituals, esoteric and ascetic practices. They were to have faith that the Guru was always present in the general body of the Khalsa, and that wherever even five Sikhs were assembled, the Guru would be with them. They were free to marry amongst themselves without any caste considerations.

However, they were to have no social or matrimonial relations with smokers,[32] with persons who shaved,[33] with persons who killed their daughters and with the descendants or followers of Pirthi Chand, Dhir Mal, Ram Rai, and such *masands*[34] as had fallen from the tenets and principles of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. They were not to worship idols, cemeteries or cremation grounds.[35] They must have faith in the singularity and unicity of God.

According to a news-writer of the period, the Guru is reported to have said, "I wish you all to embrace one creed and obliterate differences of religion. Let the four Hindu castes who have different rules abandon them."[36] The Sikhs were to live a truthful life and would never allow their attention to be deviated from the Sole Immortal God. The Guru, in fact, recommended an unqualified worship of One True Lord. All beliefs, rituals or ceremonies that implied the recognition of anything but the One True Lord were categorically rejected as is evident from the following *swaiyya* in which a direct reference is made to the Khalsa, his duties and beliefs :

> He who repeateth night and day the name of Him, Whose enduring light is unquenchable, who bestoweth not a thought on any but the One God; who hath full love and confidence in God, who putteth not faith even by mistake in fasting, or worshipping cemeteries, places of cremation, or Jogis' sepulchres; who only recognizeth the One God and no pilgrimages, alms, the non-destruction of life, Hindu penances or austerities; and in whose heart the light of the perfect One shineth; he is recognised as a pure member of the Khalsa.[37]

Significance

The creation of the new order of the Khalsa had manifold ramifications. It caused a great stir in the body-social of the Sikhs themselves. While some embraced the order of the Khalsa readily, others were reluctant. Some wanted written orders from the Guru. Still others found the code too tough and incompatible with family traditions and customs. The situation led, at some place, to dissensions among the Sikhs, while at others it resulted in tension between the Sikhs and the non-Sikhs.[38] Khatris and Brahmins, by and large, remained aloof. Some of them professed that they had faith in the religion

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of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and other Gurus; but many out of them refused to renounce the teachings of the *Vedas* and *Shastras*.

The Khalsa leadership, therefore, came to be comprised mostly of those who from the time of Manu had been denied any respectable status in the *Varna*-based Hindu society. Since the Khalsa order repudiated castes and other distinctions on the basis of wealth, profession, culture, creed, etc., Jats and other socially neglected classes rejoiced, and the Khalsa movement became synonymous with the rise of hitherto neglected classes / groups / individuals.[39]

Ideologically, the Khalsa aimed at a balanced combination of the ideals of *bhagti* and *shakti*, or to express it in modern terminology : the Khalsa was to be a brotherhood in faith and a brotherhood in arms at one and the same time.

The creation of Khalsa brought the new awareness of social egalitarianism, and had a miraculous effect on the psyche of the disciples of the Guru. Teja Singh and Dr Ganda Singh have observed that "even those people who had been considered dregs of humanity were changed, as if by magic into something rich and strange. The sweepers, the barbers, and confectioners who had not even touched a sword, and whose ancestors had lived as grovelling slaves of the so-called higher classes, became under the stimulating leadership of Sri Guru Gobind Singh doughty warriors, who never shrank from fear, and who were ready to rush into the jaws of death at the bidding of the Guru."[40] According to Gordon :

> The dry bones of an oppressed peasantry were stirred into life, and the institution of the Sikh initiational rite at the hands of a few disciples anywhere, in a place of worship, in a house or by the roadside, brought about the more full and widespread development of the new faith. In this way, within a few months, a people were born, bearded and beturbaned, fully armed and with crusaders' zeal to build a new commonwealth. They implicitly believed that 'the Khalsa shall rule, their enemies will be scattered, only they that seek refuge will be saved'. The Guru, through his initiation poured his life into his Sikhs and invested them with his own personality. There was about him a stern Olympian air, which he imparted to his followers. His impress not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds but — (contrary to the experience of ethnological experts) it also operated materially and gave amplitude to their physical freedom.[41]

Moreover, the Khalsa marked the culmination of the Sikh-Guru relationship. The Guru's regard for the Sikhs was always there, but now there was a great difference. Sri Guru Gobind Singh expressed his feelings about the Khalsa in one of his *swaiyyas*, popularly known as *Khalsé di Mehma*, in which his appreciation for them is juxtaposed with his decision to do his best for them :

> All the battles I have won against tyranny I have fought with the devoted backing of these people. Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts, by their kindness, the store houses have been filled. I owe my education to them; by their kindness were the enemies killed. I owe my glorious existence to them,otherwise ordinary men like me are found in millions. Service to them is pleasing to me; I do not enjoy serving any

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other people. Giving gifts to them is meritorious; gifts to them prove fruitful in the next life, praiseworthy in this, all other gifts are futile, my wealth, my body, my soul, my head, all that is in my house is dedicated to them.[42]

The consideration of the Guru for his Khalsa should not be interpreted as a personal affair, it should be interpreted in terms of the mission of the Guru. Just as the Guru in his own eyes was the chosen instrument of God for restraining men from senseless acts,[43] so was his Khalsa the willing agent for carrying out that mission. Thus the Khalsa was the organisation always at war for destroying the evil and protecting righteousness.

In addition to it, the Khalsa marked the completion of the evolution of the Sikh *sangat*. In the beginning, *sangat* was merely a religious gathering of devotees functioning more or less in isolation. Gradually, there occurred an increase in its functions and the isolation of one from others was lessened by the forging of common links, such as the preparation of scripture, the building up of certain religious centres, institutions of *manjis* and *masands* as the agencies of the central leadership, and assertion of the principle of the supremacy of the Guru. With the foundation of the Khalsa, the network of semi-integrated *sangats* was fully integrated.

The order of Khalsa was inaugurated by Sri Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 CE. It is conjectured by some scholars that the Guru before initiating the Order invoked goddess Durga to bless him. Of all the scholars having such views, McLeod's remarks are the most striking because of their peculiarity. He states :

> Shivalik hills have long been a stronghold of the *devi* or *Sakti* cult.... The result of prolonged residence within the Shivaliks was that elements of the hill culture eventually penetrated the Jat Sikh culture of the plains and introduced yet another stage in the evolution of the *Panth*.[44]
>
> In his (Guru's) writings and in those which were produced at his court, we find constant reference to the mighty exploits of the Mother Goddess, one of the most notable being his own *Chandi ki Var*.[45]

He then hastens to add another work of *Chandi Charitar* (*Satasaya*) from *Markandeya Puran* to the list and ends with the explication that as a result of the fusion of the two cultures, a new and powerful synthesis took shape, one which prepared the *Panth* for determinative role in the chaotic circumstances of the eighteenth century.[46]

The remarks of McLeod can be split into three parts for purposes of understanding and analysis.

i) That the Guru had full faith in *Sakti* cult.

ii) That the influences of hill culture which in his perception was predominantly *Sakti* culture was so pervading that it influenced and permeated the Sikh culture which in his opinion was a Jat culture, pre-eminently.

iii) Jat culture and hill culture when interacted with each other, a new synthesis came into being which unleashed powerful forces which helped the Sikhs to tide over difficulties that came in their way in the eighteenth century.

McLeod's remarks, or for that matter those of the scholars of his ilk, are frivolous.

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Religiously, empirically and ideologically, these cannot be justified.

The *Sakti* cult in different forms had been prevalent in India, especially in its north-western region since ancient times. The worship of Mother Goddess was probably widely practised in the Indus Valley region as well. During the Aryan period doubtlessly, male gods were predominant, but the traces of Devi cult can be found in *Vedic* literature. In this connection references can be gleaned in ample measure from different texts of Aryans, as for instance, *Debi Sukta* in *Rig Veda*, which provided the basis for the cult of *Chandi* in *Markandeya Puran* and *Sukta* in the *Atharveda* (VI, 38) in which Devi was worshipped as immanent in the entire creation. As Aryan settlements spread in different parts of India, the concept of *Sakti* received wider acceptance and assumed subtle ramifications. According to A.C. Banerjee, "It developed in some of the *Upnishads* and *Purans* and particularly in the *Tantras*."[47] In the northwest, the *Sakti* cult found a prominent place in the Kashmiri *Saivism* as also in the philosophy of Gorakh Nath which inspired the Jogis.

Although the Jogis were primarily devotees of Siva, they were subject to strong *Tantric* influence. The Aye-Panthis mentioned in a *Japji* canto (no. XXVIII) as also in a contemporary work, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, worshipped a female disciple of Gorakh Nath named Bimla Debi who was called Mai, later on corrupted into Ai.

In the hill region of the Punjab where Hinduism in its most archaic form existed, quite a few people were worshippers of Devi or Mother goddess. In Kangra alone there were numerous local *devis* (goddesses) and 360 of them are supposed to have assembled together at the founding of the Kangra temple.[48]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev's teachings had no scope for recognition of any deity, male or female, except the Transcendental Being, who is the only one, formless, infinite, self-existent, all-effulgence, and the sole Creator of this world and beyond. He is immanent in the sense that all creation emanated from Him. The goddesses or other deities do not have any separate entity, much less equality with or superiority over the Supreme Being. Hence Sri Guru Nanak Dev and his successor Gurus, including Sri Guru Gobind Singh, and their disciples worshipped and obeyed only the One God and no other deity. Nor did Sri Guru Nanak Dev or Sri Guru Gobind Singh seek anything from any mortal or god / goddess. On the contrary, Sri Guru Nanak Dev saw himself on a mission to connect people to *Naam* in order to show them the way to improve their lot.[49]

The attempt to associate Sikhism with *Tantra* becomes more pronounced in regard to Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He has been described as a protagonist of '*Sakti* cult' whose interpretation of *Tantric* philosophy teaches man a new way of obtaining salvation through war. To appraise the Guru as such is to misinterpret and distort Guru's mission and approach. The *Sakti* cult has elaborate rituals. Sri Guru Gobind Singh did not subscribe to that philosophy nor did he accept these rituals as necessary adjuncts of the spiritual discipline. He did not recognise pilgrimages, alms-giving, penances or austerities as legitimate means for spiritual elevation.

In this perspective, the Guru can only be described as opposed to the very basis

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of the *Sakti* cult. Salvation according to the Guru is full realisation of the unicity of God, which can be realised through proper discipline. War for the Guru was never an end in itself, rather it was a sacred duty in certain circumstances, the purpose being not to win salvation but elimination of injustice and oppression. The Guru uttered :

> Whoever decides to abide in the Khalsa shall not fear the clash of arms, but be ever ready for the combat and defence of his faith.[50]

Again :

> Take the broom of divine knowledge in thy hand and sweep away the filth of timidity.[51]

Thus, the utterances of the tenth Nanak were in total conformity with those of his predecessors. Timidity in Sikh ideology has been considered as bar to spiritual advancement as also to the proper performance of temporal duties. In Sri Guru Gobind Singh's scheme of regeneration, these two aspects of life are closely linked. The Guru prays : "May both my kitchen and sword prevail in this world."

The Guru's cardinal concern was with the kitchen and the sword, one the emblem of service to assist the poor and helpless, and the other, the emblem of power to resist and extirpate the tyrants.

From the above, it can be safely assumed that the Guru did not worship Durga or have any faith in *Sakti* cult. Nor is it correct that a synthesis of the Jat culture and the hill culture helped the *Panth* to play a determinative role in its affairs in the eighteenth century, for there is hardly anything that could be borrowed from the Jat and hill culture in the creation of the Khalsa. While the former was largely tribal, the latter was based on caste and mired in feudal values and superstitions.

The most important work in Sikh annals pertaining to the times of the Tenth Master is *Sri Gursobha* by Sainapat, one of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's court poets. The work gives a detailed and realistic account of the creation of the Khalsa on the *Vaisakhi* day and other events of the Guru. It does not make a mention of the worship of Durga. Had it been a part of the event, Sainapat would not have missed it, rather he would have flashed it. McLeod purposely states that the work was not contemporary even while accepting that it was completed in 1711 CE. However, the date given on the manuscript is clearly 1701 CE.[52] Whether the work was completed in 1701 CE or 1711 CE, there is no doubt left that Sainapat was a contemporary and his was an eyewitness account.

Apart from negative evidence of the complete absence of the story of *devi* worship or *hom*, Sainapat gives positive statement indicating that "Devi like other *avtaars* only indulged in egoist self-praise for her own worship and not that of God, the Creator." At another place in *Sri Gursobha*, he avers "thousands like Dhruva, thousands like Vishnu, many like Rama, the king, many goddesses, many Gorakhs offer their lives at his (Sri Guru Gobind Singh's) feet." The Mughal news-writer reporting on the occasion of the formation of Khalsa noted that the Guru urged his followers "not to adore incarnations such as Ram, Krishna, Brahma and Durga; but to believe in Sri Guru Nanak Dev and other Sikh Gurus."[53]

The most decisive evidence in favour of total rejection of the *devi* story is found

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in the Guru's ideology as it is embodied in his own writings. He had total commitment to the concept of *Ik Onkar* and shared the vision of transcendence with Sri Guru Nanak Dev. He, therefore, could not worship any god or goddess. He says :

> O man, worship none but God, not a thing made by Him. Know that He who was in the beginning, unborn, invincible and indestructible is God.

Again :

> Without the support of the One Name deem all religious ceremonies as superstitions.[54]

Sri Guru Gobind Singh was an uncompromising monotheist, so he cannot be said to have worshipped *devi*, much less on the occasion of the initiation of the Khalsa order, for which he had been ordained by God Himself.[55]

Some confusion had arisen from the Guru's use of the name 'Bhagauti', by which goddess Durga has often been called. But the Guru uses it in the sense of God or of sword, which is identified with God.

The brief discussion leads to the conclusion that the story of *hom / devi* has no historical basis.

Why did the Guru set up the Khalsa ? Did he do so to avenge the unjust persecution of his father ? Was he constrained by the contemporary politico-social scenario ?

Cunningham says, "The Guru acted... under the mixed impulse of avenging his own and his country's wrongs."[56] He became an "irrepressible foe of the Mohammedan name."[57] His aim was far-reaching, "In heart of the powerful empire, he set himself the task of subverting it." J.N. Sarkar observed that the Guru was "not the person to leave his father's death unavenged"[58] and so he began the policy of "open hostility to Islam." Gokul Chand Narang also endorsed the view of Cunningham, and concluded that the Guru's purpose was to avenge his father's death and strike a blow at the power of Aurangzeb.[59]

It is a pity that neither J.N. Sarkar nor G.C. Narang made an independent inquiry. They blindly followed Cunningham and took it for granted that it was but natural that the Guru should seek to avenge his father's cruel death and to punish the ruler who was responsible for it. These scholars attributed ordinary human motives to the Guru, neglecting absolutely the sublimity of his mission.

The story elaborated by Cunningham appears to have been based on *Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din's* version of the speech of Sri Guru Gobind Singh at Keshgarh on the *Vaisakhi* of 1699 CE as it is recorded in his work *Tarikh-i-Punjab*. According to him the Guru is reported to have uttered :

> You should remember that the Musalmans have maltreated us. They have killed our ancestors. Now in accordance with the mandatory wish of my father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, I cherish the desire of avenging myself upon my father's murderers.[60]

Any such direction would have been entirely inconsistent with Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's tenor of life. He never lost an opportunity to emphasise that he / she who is unmoved by joy and sorrow, to whom friend and foe are alike, is a truly liberated soul. Also, it is an accepted fact that Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur had voluntarily gone to

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Delhi, ready to sacrifice his life in order to stress the right of an individual to relate to God. Therefore, the question of "avenging" does not arise.

In view of this, the statement attributed to Sri Guru Gobind Singh by Buté Shah (*Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din*) and believed by Cunningham or J.N. Sarkar is incorrect. There is another very cogent reason which renders the statement of Buté Shah redundant and superfluous. Buté Shah places the creation of the Khalsa soon after the execution of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and before Sri Guru Gobind Singh's battle with the hill *rajas* and the Mughals. This is a cut and dried case of faulty chronology that suggests a connection between the execution of the ninth Nanak and the creation of the Khalsa, which is not true.

From this two conclusions follow. One, Buté Shah did not verify the fact, and secondly, he did not take cognizance of the series of events that took place between 1675 CE and 1699 CE and which could provide him the right historical perspective. Similarly, the contention that the Guru was openly hostile towards Islam is entirely baseless. The Guru was never against Islam, or for that matter, against any religion. The Guru was a devoted votary of Love, raising it to the status of God. It was for this reason that both Hindus and Muslims were attracted towards him. Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura together with his sons and seven hundred followers fought hard on the Guru's side in the battle of Bhangani in 1688 in which he lost two of his sons and hundreds of his disciples. In the battle of 1702, Sayyid Beg and Maimon Khan commanded the Guru's forces in fighting against the Mughal troops. Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, in defiance of the wish of Wazir Khan, fearlessly and unhesitatingly helped the Guru out of his difficulty at Machhiwara. In *Akal Ustat* the Guru says :

One man by shaving his head is accepted as a *sanyasi*,
another a Jogi or a *brahmchari*, a third as a *jati*.
Some are Hindus while others are Muslims.
Of the latter some are *Shias* and others are *Sunnis*.
Man's caste should be considered as one.
Karta (Creator) *Karim* (Beneficent) are the same.
Rajak (Provider) *Raheem* (Merciful) are the same.
Let no man even by mistake, suppose there is a difference.[61]
... ... Temple and Mosque are the same,
Hindu worship and Muslim prayer are the same.
All men are alike, but they are under delusion.
Deities, demons, heavenly dancers, singers, Muslims, Hindus
wear different dresses under the conditions of their countries.
But they possess eyes, ears, bodies, made of same elements
composed of earth, air, fire, sky, and water.
Allah and *Alakh* (unknowable) are the same, the *Puranas* and the *Quran* are the same.
They are all alike, it is the One God who created all.[62]

The Guru in his composition *Jaap* has given 735 names of God out of which thirty are from Islam. In another composition, *Akal Ustat*, the Guru is doubly forthright

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and remarks :

> Even in error deem not the God of the Hindus to be different from the God of the Muslims. Worship One God, recognise the enlightener. All men have the same form, and the same divine light.[63]

Sujan Rai Bhandari wrote in 1698 CE :

> In their (Sikhs) eyes their own people and others as well as friends and foes are alike. They love their friends but they do not ill-treat their enemies.[64]

In the presence of such a plethora of evidence, it is only appropriate to reject the view that the Guru entertained hostility towards Islam or created the Khalsa to avenge his father's execution.

The Khalsa was created as per Will of *Waheguru* as revealed to Sri Guru Nanak Dev and his successors from Sri Guru Angad Dev to Sri Guru Gobind Singh. It's foundation was laid on the conquest of fear of death. A Sikh who conquered the fear of death came forward to undergo *amrit*-initiation and become a Khalsa. This emergence of Khalsa heralded a new dawn in the evolution of man as a social animal — that of each individual as a sovereign.

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. The Arabic term for polytheism is *shirk* meaning 'associating other (false gods) with God.' *Hughes' Dictionary of Islam*, p. 579.
2. *Kufr* means primarily 'covering up the truth' (regarding God) and secondarily 'ingratitude'.
3. Sarkar, J.N. : *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, Orient Longman, 1972, pp. 163-64.
4. Sharma, Sri Ram : *The Religious Policy of the Mughals*, Delhi, 1962, p. 98.
5. Sarkar, J.N. : op. cit., p. 174.
6. *Kalimat-i-Taiyyabat*, p. 115.
7. Gupta, Hari Ram : *History of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1984, p. 249.
8. Khan, Bakhtawar : *Mirat-i-Alam*, p. 159, as quoted by Hari Ram Gupta in his *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I.
9. Sarkar, J.N. : op. cit.
10. Azad, Abul Kalam : *Hijat-i-Sahadi*, pp. 52-53.
11. *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri*, p. 120.
12. Bilgrami, Ghulam Ali Azad : *Khazana-é-Amira*, p. 328.
13. Khafi Khan : *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II, p. 213.
14. Macauliffe, M.A. : *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, p. 89.
15. Ibid., pp. 322-323.
    About the Guru's attitude towards *masands*, also refer to *hukamnamas* no. 46, 50 from the book *Hukamnamé* by Dr Ganda Singh.
16. Ganda Singh : *Hukamnamé*, Punjabi Univerisity, Patiala, 1967, *hukamnama* no. 3 of Guru Hargobind, p. 67, and *hukamnama* no. 8 of Guru Tegh Bahadur, p. 76.
17. Ganda Singh : op. cit., *hukamnama* no. 46.
18. Ibid., *hukamnamas* no. 49-50; Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 95.
19. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 91.
    Sainapat : op. cit., p. 30.

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"The Sikhs should come to me wearing long hair. Once a man becomes a Sikh, he should never shave himself. He should not touch tobacco and should receive initiation of the sword."

20. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 91.
21. Harbans Singh : *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1994, p. 84.
22. *Nishan-i-Sikhi ast in Panj Harf,*
    Hargiz na Ba-sihd a zin panj muaf,
    Kara, kardo, kanga bidan,
    Bina kesh hech ast jumla nishan.
    These five letters of K are emblems of Sikhism. These five are most incumbent, and are steel bangle, big knife, shorts, comb and unshorn hair. Without unshorn hair, all others are of no significance.
23. Harbans Singh : op. cit.
24. Kapur Singh : *The Baisakhi of Sri Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 139-148.
25. Harbans Singh : op. cit., p. 87.
26. Sarup Singh : op. cit., pp. 120-125.
27. Ibid.
28. Ahmed Shah Batalia in his *Tarikh-i-Hind* and Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din in his *Tarikh-i-Punjab* specifically mention twenty thousand persons undergoing Khalsa initiation. In some modern writings the number given is 80,000. These computations appear to be no more than guesses. But it may be safely assumed that the number of persons present at Anandpur Sahib at this time ran into thousands and it was larger than the usual gatherings on the *Vaisakhi* day.
29. Sainapat : *Gursobha*, Sikh History Research Board, ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, 1967, 1/197.
30. The exact import of the term *Khalsa* provides an interesting study. Dr Ernest Trumpp, a translator of *Adi Granth* (1877 CE) holds that it is an Arabic term meaning personal estate. The initiated Sikhs were the personal estate of the Guru. Cunningham writes that *Khalsa* or *Khalisa* is an Arabic derivation and has such original or secondary meaning as pure, special five, and company. In the revenue records of the sultans and the Mughals, *Khalsa* denoted the lands which were under direct control of the emperor. In Sikh parlance *Khalsa* denotes the Kingdom of the Guru or that the Sikhs are pure chosen people who are answerable only to *Waheguru*. The Guru called his initiated Sikhs the *Khalsa* because they personified sovereignty. They were not his paid soldiery but were a body of volunteers who were ever prepared to shed their blood for *Waheguru*'s *Hukam*.
31. The photocopies appear in *Hukamnamé*, ed. by Dr Ganda Singh on serial nos. 5 and 8.
32. Sainapat : op. cit., p. 31.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 36.
35. Bhai Nand Lal : *Rahitnama*
    '*Gor marhi mat bhul na jané*.' — Worship not even by mistake a tomb or a relic of cremation.
36. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 68.
    The above address is based on the report of a newswriter sent to the Mughal court as it is vouched for by the Persian historian Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din.
37. For translation of the relevant portions of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's compositions, see M.A. Macauliffe's *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, pp. 261-3, 315-10.
38. Sainapat : op. cit., Chp. VII.
39. Koer Singh understands that the rise of the Jat power was the direct result of the creation of the Khalsa. A close study of chapter IX of *Gurbilas* makes it abundantly clear that the lower

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classes felt a sense of pride to join the new order and, in a way, it found in it the augury of a new era for themselves.

40. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh : op. cit., p. 68.
41. Cunningham, J.D. : *A History of the Sikhs*, reprint, S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1955, p. 84.
    Elphinstone : *History of India*, II, p. 56.
42. Ashta, Dharam Pal : *The Poetry of Dasam Granth*, p. 146.
    Trilochan Singh : *Sri Guru Gobind Singh : A Brief Life Sketch*, Delhi, 1964, pp. 20-21.
    Trilochan Singh, *et al*, : *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, London, 1960, p. 272.
43. Bal, S.S. & Grewal, J.S. : *Sri Guru Gobind Singh*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, reprint, 1989, p. 124.
44. McLeod, W.H. : *Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford Univery Press, Bombay, 1975, p. 13.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid., p. 14.
47. Banerjee, A.C. : *Sikh Gurus and Sikh Religion*, p. 300, Delhi, 1983.
48. Rose, H.A. : *Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province*, p. 318.
49. *Puratan Janamsakhi.*
50. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 223.
51. Ibid., p. 167.
52. Sainapat : op. cit., Chp. I, p. 10.
53. *Ma'asir-ul-Umara*, Persian version, Vol. I, p. 237.
54. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 325.
55. *Pragtio Khalsa Parmatm ki Mauj.*
56. Cunningham, J.D. : op. cit., p. 60.
57. Ibid., p. 59.
58. Sarkar, J.N. : *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1928, p. 314.
59. Narang, Gokal Chand : *Transformation of Sikhism*, reprint, Ludhiana, 1989, p. 88.
60. Grewal, J.S. & Bal, S.S. : op. cit., Appendix C.
61. *Akal Ustat*, *Swaiyya* 85.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., 86.
64. *Khulasat-ut-Twarikh*, Punjabi translation, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 81.

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15

NANAK X
— BATTLES OF THE KHALSA —

The immediate effect of the emergence of the Khalsa was that it brought the hostility of the hill chiefs out in the open. They saw in the activities of the Guru a potent threat to their own authority and established values. They found in the Guru's mission and reforms something fundamentally different from what they had been brought up to uphold. After the creation of the Khalsa, one of the first acts of the Guru was that all the Sikhs should be initiated according to the new rites, and for this purpose, they were required to come to Anandpur Sahib. They responded enthusiastically. Ever mounting number of the initiated Sikhs surcharged with egalitarian spirit, disengaged from orthodox ways of life and always ready to combat the evil, seriously alarmed the hill chiefs. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Guru's continued presence in their midst was considered a direct challenge to their feudal order and their style of living.

Besides this, the hill chiefs and particularly Ajmer Chand of Kahlur, had another grievance against the Guru. The ever increasing number of Sikhs who visited Anandpur Sahib created the problem of supplies. The Guru had no possessions besides Anandpur Sahib and its suburbs. For provisions, the Guru depended on the voluntary contributions from his followers, which usually were sufficient. But in the wake of the call of the Guru, the number of visitors to Anandpur Sahib increased manifold. At times, the supply of provisions did not match the demand, and had to be supplemented from the neighbouring villages.[1] The hill *rajas*, especially Ajmer Chand, the *raja* of Kahlur state in which Anandpur Sahib was located, did not like this and would often create trouble by inciting people, directly and clandestinely against the Guru.

The mindset of the hill *rajas* is evident from the incident involving Alim Chand and Balia Chand, chieftains of some States,[2] who attacked the Guru when they saw that he was out hunting with only a few Sikhs. The Sikhs gave a determined fight, but because of the enemy's superior numerical strength, they started losing ground. Soon, however, reinforcement under Bhai Udey Singh reached, which turned the tables. Alim Chand lost his right arm and fled the field. Balia Chand, too, was seriously wounded, and his soldiers took to their heels. The Guru returned victorious.[3]

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First Battle of Anandpur Sahib — 1700 CE

The defeat of Alim Chand and Balia Chand unnerved the hill *rajas*, who met in a council, and decided to approach the emperor for help. They represented to him, through the nawab of Sirhind, that they had failed to restrain the Guru and that if the emperor did not deal with him instantaneously and firmly, he might later find the situation uncontrollable. According to M.A. Macauliffe, the *subedar* of Delhi under instructions from Aurangzeb who was at that time in the southern part of India, despatched a force of ten thousand under his two able generals Painda Khan (different from Painda Khan of sixth Nanak's time) and Din Beg. The local hill chiefs joined them at Ropar. The Guru encountered the combined forces near Anandpur Sahib. In a sanguinary battle, Painda Khan was killed. Din Beg and the hill *rajas* fled.[4] They were pursued by the Khalsa soldiers for some distance. A large booty consisting of horses, arms and baggage fell into the hands of the Sikhs.

Much chagrined and agonised, the hill *rajas* now resolved to act against the Guru independently of the Mughals. They organised a federation and gave its leadership to Ajmer Chand,[5] son of Bhim Chand of Bilaspur, who was the most knowledgeable among the hill chiefs with regard to the Guru and his Sikhs, because of the location of Guru's headquarters in his state. He sent a message to the Guru that he should either vacate Anandpur Sahib, or pay the taxes thereof, as it lay in his territory. In case he did not respond appropriately, he would face the *raja's* wrath. The Guru downright rejected his demands, and to counter his threat issued fiats to his followers to join him at Anandpur Sahib to participate in the war likely to be imposed. They responded in large numbers.[6] The hill *rajas* besieged Anandpur Sahib. The Sikhs took positions in their forts, particularly Anandgarh, Fatehgarh and Kesgarh. On the first day, 29th of *Bhadon*, 1757 BK (July 28, 1700 CE) Ajmer Chand made a forceful attack on Taragarh near Anandgarh, but was repulsed by Sahibzada Ajit Singh, the eldest son of the Guru. On the side of the Sikhs, Ishar Singh and Kalian Singh were killed amongst others.[7] A hill chieftain, Raja Ghumand Chand, suffered severe wounds in the battle.

Next day, Ajmer Chand again mounted fierce assault on the Fatehgarh fort. He and his allies met with stout resistance, and in the sallies organised by determined Sikhs under the wise command of experienced Bhagwan Singh, they suffered heavy casualties in a five hour battle. As the sun set, the fighting stopped. Jawahar Singh and Bhagwan Singh received martyrdom.[8]

On the following day with the advent of dawn, fighting resumed. Ajmer Chand launched a vigorous attack, this time on Agamgarh, but failed miserably. The Sikhs lost their veterans, Bagh Singh and Gharbar Singh.[9]

Now Ajmer Chand called a conference of his allies to take stock of the situation. It was decided that to begin with the fort of Lohgarh should be stormed to be followed by simultaneous attacks on other sides of Anandpur Sahib. The command of the troops meant to storm the fort was given to a very brave chieftain, Kesri Chand Jaswaria.[10] He meticulously planned his manoeuvres, one of which was that a highly intoxicated elephant would be set against the door of Lohgarh to break it for the hill forces to

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enter the fort. The plan though made in camera[11] leaked out and the Guru forthwith took steps to counter it. The Guru wanted to appoint Duni Chand,[12] considered to be very bold and strong-minded, to face the elephant, but his spirit failed and he deserted the Guru.[13] Bachittar Singh, son of Bhai Mani Singh, lost not even a fraction of a second to offer his services to meet the challenge of the elephant. The Guru gave him a pat and handed over a specially forged *nagni* spear with which to face the intoxicated elephant.[14]

As the morning of 1st of *Katak*, 1756 BK dawned, the hill forces, under the overall command of Ajmer Chand, positioned themselves near the fort of Lohgarh. From the front side rushed the forces led by Kesri Chand. They drove the intoxicated elephant to the main gate of the fort. When the furious animal advanced to strike the door with all its might, Bachittar Singh, having invoked the blessings of the Guru, struck it with his spear with such a force that it pierced through the plates covering its forehead, to the brain making it lose balance with the result that it turned back, and ran pell-mell, trampling everything in the way including the enemy's own soldiers. In the disorder thus caused, Udey Singh, already astride his swift horse, sprang forward and challenged Kesri Chand. Kesri Chand seated on his horse attacked with his sword. Udey Singh swung aside and then hit him with his sword so strongly that his body was cleaved in twain.[15] Kesri Chand having met his nemesis, Ajmer Chand thought it appropriate to seek safety in retreat. Alam Singh, son of Makhan Shah, received martyrdom in the field.[16]

Fighting continued for four consecutive days but did not yield any result favourable to the hill *rajas*; rather ignominy and demoralisation came to be their lot. More failures in battle might have spelt disaster for them. These could have given opportunity to some disgruntled elements in their territories to defy them, besides being tempted to join the Khalsa. Now to save face, the hill *rajas* decided upon a stratagem at the suggestion of Pandit Parmanand, the family priest of the *raja* of Kahlur,[17] well known for his cunning. They sent Parmanand with a letter to Anandpur Sahib. He very cunningly and stealthily placed it at the gate of Anandgarh duly tied to an image of a cow with *janeoo*. In the letter, it was written that the *rajas* sincerely regretted the losses on both sides and desired a settlement immediately, so that the purposeless fighting might be stopped.[18] The letter also stated that a unilateral retreat on their part would be too humiliating and mortifying, and that if the Guru vacated Anandpur Sahib, the siege would be raised and then he could come back after some time, if he desired. According to Sainapat, they appealed to the Guru's sense of chivalry by requesting him to leave Anandpur Sahib to them as the *gau-bhét*, i.e., "the touch of the cow."[19]

The Guru agreed, expecting that the hill *rajas* had realised the futility of waging war.

Battle of Nirmohgarh — 1700 CE

The Guru came out in the open ground leaving Anandpur Sahib in the hands of some of his brave and trusted men and established himself at Nirmohgarh, four

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kilometres from Anandpur Sahib. The hill chiefs throwing their promise to the winds again attacked the Sikhs. The Sikhs resisted with all their might and the enemy had to retreat.[20] In this battle, Diwan Sahib Singh and his band of one thousand Sikhs bore the brunt. The Diwan and some other eminent Sikhs, such as Mathura Singh, Surat Singh, Deva Singh, Anup Singh and Sarup Singh, were killed.[21] Then the Guru himself took the command and made a vigorous assault so that the hill forces had to lift the siege.

Ajmer Chand, now exasperated, decided to square up the issue with the Guru once and for all. He decided to get aid from his suzerain, the Mughal government, and sent an envoy for the purpose.[22] It is not clear whether this appeal was made to Aurangzeb in the south or to Muazzam at Kabul or to the Mughal government at Delhi, whether directly or through the *subedar* of Sirhind. In any case, the Mughal contingents arrived shortly at Sirhind to collaborate with its *faujdar*, who had been instructed to aid the vassal chief of Bilaspur against the Guru.[23]

The Mughal army as well as the army of the hill *rajas* got together at Sirhind and then moved on to achieve the target. The Guru, already abreast of circumstances, had made preparations. Apart from retaining some Sikhs routinely coming to have audience, he had invited daring men of different *sangats* from several towns and villages, given them arms and enlisted them as his soldiers.[24] The Guru's strategy was defensive, while that of the enemy was offensive. The allied forces attacked Nirmohgarh from one side, while Ajmer Chand attacked from the other. Their objective was to weaken the defence of the Sikhs. In Sainapat's simile, the enemy surrounded Nirmohgarh, as "the stars surround the moon".[25] The contest lasted for about a day before the Khalsa could get respite from the enemy's vigorous attack. Ultimately, the Guru was constrained to evacuate Nirmohgarh, probably because of the use of cannons by the Mughal *faujdar*.[26] But before they could cross the river Satluj, they were overtaken by the enemy soldiers who were naturally keen to obstruct the passage.[27] The Khalsa fought desperately for four hours[28] and succeeded eventually in crossing the river and entering the territory of Raja Dharampal,[29] the chief of Jaswan, who was an admirer of the Guru. The Guru and the Khalsa marched towards the town of Basohli.

Battle of Basohli — 1700 CE
In Jaswan State

The Guru had hardly left the place, when another engagement took place on the bank of river Satluj. The Sikhs fought gallantly and forced the enemy to roll back. The combined forces of the hill *rajas* also crossed the river and attacked the Sikhs at Basohli. The Guru put up a formidable defence and once again the enemy was unable to subdue the Sikh forces. The battle is known as battle of Basohli.[30]

After this, the Mughal troops returned to Sirhind with doubtful satisfaction of having achieved, although at a great cost, the limited objective of expelling the Khalsa from the territory of Kahlur on the eastern side of the Satluj. The hill *rajas* also went back to their respective territories.

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The Guru stayed at Basohli for some days resting and hunting.[31] Soon, the Guru took initiative against Ajmer Chand leading incursions into his territory on the north of the river Satluj. He gradually moved towards Anandpur Sahib. At this time, the Gujjars and Ranghars of the village Kamlot attacked a party of Sikhs on hunting expedition. The Guru, on being informed, ordered the Khalsa to teach them a lesson with the result that Udey Singh who headed the hunting party, led an attack on the village. The Gujjars and Ranghars were severely punished. Jiwan Singh,[32] son of Prem Chand, a notable general, got killed in this contest. His dead body was brought to Basohli where it was cremated with honours.

Second Battle of Anandpur Sahib — 1700 CE
Skirmish at Bhadsali

The Guru finding that Wazir Khan, the *subedar* of Sirhind, had gone back, and the hill *rajas* were satisfied that they had at long last got rid of the Guru, marched back to Anandpur Sahib,[33] and lost no time to repair the forts and other buildings badly damaged by the hill forces. He also took prompt steps so that Anandpur Sahib functioned in full glory as the headquarters of the Khalsa. No wonder, the Sikhs in large numbers started surging to Anandpur Sahib to seek the Guru's benedictions and also to offer their services. In the meanwhile news reached that the *sangat* of Darap region had been stripped of their belongings including their offerings for the Guru by Ranghars of Bajrur. The Guru asked Ajit Singh, his eldest son, to at once proceed to Bajrur to punish the culprits. The order was obeyed forthwith and Sahibzada Ajit Singh besieged the village. Chittu and Mittu, the leaders of the village, were put to the sword, and the village was ransacked. People took lesson and never after that did they plunder or coerce the Sikh *sangats*.[34]

Towards the end of 1700 CE, the peace of Anandpur Sahib was again disturbed by Wazir Khan, the *subedar* of Sirhind, who made a surprise attack. The Sikhs had to evacuate the city and proceed to Bhadsali, 45 kilometres from Anandpur Sahib beyond Una across the river Swan. The Mughal forces went in pursuit and engaged the Guru's forces at Bhadsali. In the hard fought battle the Sikhs came out victorious. Soon after, when the din of the war diminished and tempers cooled down, the Guru returned to Anandpur Sahib[35] to renew ties with his Sikhs and to extend the area of Sikh influence.

The Guru obliged Sidh Shah, the ruler of Mandi, by paying a short visit to him in 1701 CE.[36] He was accorded a very warm welcome by the *raja*. At Mandi, the Guru interacted with other *rajas* who had assembled there, seemingly in response to Sidh Shah's invitation. In later years, while some of them played only a marginal role against the Guru, the *raja* of Mandi's role was that of a follower and sincere admirer.

The Guru attended Rawalsar fair held every year on the first of *Vaisakh*. On this occasion the *raja* begged the Guru for the perennial safety of his capital. The Guru granted the boon. The memory of the event is preserved in the tradition that the Guru got a small earthen vessel, *handi*, and threw it into the river Beas flowing by the side of Mandi. The vessel did not dissolve. The Guru uttered, "As my earthen vessel is safe so

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will remain safe your Mandi. When Mandi is plundered, heavenly balls will be fired."[37] It is obviously because of the blessings of the Guru that the town of Mandi continued to enjoy immunity from the Sikh intrusions till 1839 CE.

Third Battle of Anandpur Sahib — 1702 CE

In 1702 CE, Sayyed Beg and Alif Khan, two eminent commanders of the Mughals on their way to Delhi from Lahore, were tempted by Ajmer Chand to attack the Guru by offering them a huge sum. According to Hari Ram Gupta, they were promised the payment of one thousand rupees a day.[38] Both the commanders marched towards Anandpur Sahib; but after a few skirmishes, Sayyed Beg was so impressed by the Guru's charismatic personality that he thought it appropriate to join the Guru.[39] Alif Khan had to retire in spite of his long-nursed desire to avenge his failure, which he had met earlier while fighting against the Guru in the Kangra hills.[40]

The Fourth and Fifth Battles of Anandpur Sahib — 1703 CE

In 1703 CE, the Guru had to face attack twice. On both the occasions Ajmer Chand was the architect of the attack. On the first occasion, he attacked in association with Bhup Chand, Wazir Singh and Dev Saran.[41] On the second occasion, he sought help from the Mughal *subedar* of Delhi and then attacked. On both occasions he suffered defeat.[42] Sri Guru Gobind Singh's control over Anandpur Sahib remained firm to the disappointment of Ajmer Chand, and to the dismay of his associate hill *rajas*.[43] The Mughal commanders were also nonplussed at the high morale of the Sikhs. In the second attack another remarkable thing happened. Maiman Khan, a Mughal commander, deserted his side and joined the Guru in response to the call of his conscience. In the contest, one hill chief and Sayyed Beg were killed. The enemy forces fought so hard that they drove the Sikhs out of Anandpur Sahib and plundered the town. Soon after, the Sikhs returned, fell upon heavily laden enemy troops, retrieved their possessions and recovered Anandpur Sahib.

After some time, the hostilities again started. The reasons were the same, viz., the increasing prestige of the Guru and dislike for the Sikh movement which championed values diametrically opposed to those held by the hill *rajas*.

Sixth Battle of Anandpur Sahib — May 1704 CE

Some hill chiefs, who could not tolerate the presence of the Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib, arranged a formidable combination against the Guru and proceeded to attack Anandpur Sahib. They were met by cannon shots from the fort of Anandgarh. They decided to lay siege to the town instead of suffering heavy losses in an attempt to capture it by a direct assault. In that plan also, they could not achieve any success against the sorties of the Khalsa cavalry, whose shrewd tactics completely discomfited them. The hill chiefs were left with no alternative except immediate retreat. In spite of this, the hill *rajas* never relented in their determination to oust the Guru from their territory. They made preparations on a large scale. The Gujjars and Ranghars were

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also incited to join the war against the Sikhs. They harnessed their own resources with care and assiduity; they applied to the Mughal authorities,[44] and got the assistance of the troops from Sirhind and Lahore. The allied forces soon attacked Anandpur Sahib; but the Khalsa soldiers proved to be superior to them, and they were driven out of Anandpur Sahib. Then the allies encircled the Sikhs on all sides and the great siege of Anandpur Sahib began.

In this exigency, the Guru invited help from the Sikhs. He issued several letters to different *sangats* to immediately reach Anandpur Sahib fully armed (1704 CE). One such letter was sent to Bhai Mukhia and Bhai Parsa, who were asked to come with "cavalries, footmen, gunners and daring youth."[45] The Guru divided his army into six contingents, with one each in five forts, and a detachment of 500 men kept in reserve. Anandgarh was in the Guru's personal charge; Fatehgarh was entrusted to Udey Singh; Holgarh was in the command of Mohkam Singh; Ajit Singh controlled Kesgarh, and his brother Jujhar Singh held Lohgarh. Ajit Singh won a great victory on the very first day by killing Jagatullah, leader of the Ranghars and Gujjars. Two heavy guns named *Baghan* (Tigress) and *Vijay Ghosh* (Victory Warrant) were nominated for Anandgarh. They wrought havoc in the enemy ranks. On the first day's fight Wazir Khan lost nine hundred men.

The siege was conducted with great intensity, and planned in such a manner that all ingress and egress for both goods and persons were completely blocked. All supplies being cut off, the Sikhs were put to great hardships. Food position became extremely precarious, and the Sikhs were driven to undertake some dangerous expeditions. The Sikhs sallied out to snatch provisions from the besiegers, but they met only partial success, and that too, on some occasions after which the allies collected their stores at one place and guarded them night and day. The Sikhs resorted to the direct assaults on the allies, but they were worsted by them. A small hilly channel taken off from Charan Ganga which supplied water to Anandgarh was diverted by Kahlur *raja* from its course.

Having suffered extreme hardships, the Sikhs besought the Guru to evacuate the fort, but the Guru counselled them patience for some more time. The Guru told them, however, that everybody was free to leave, whenever he / she wanted to.

When the enemy learnt of the dire straits in which the Sikhs and the Guru were placed, they planned a different strategy to take advantage of the situation. They sent a message to the Guru suggesting that if he decided to abandon Anandpur Sahib, the Sikhs would be allowed a safe passage. The Guru did not trust them, and, therefore, did not accept the offer. But some of the Sikhs, who believed that the situation was desperate, insisted that the offer of the enemy be accepted and Anandpur Sahib abandoned. At this juncture the Guru considered it sagacious to expose the hypocrisy of the enemy.

The Guru ordered a number of bullocks to be laden with rubbish and useless articles. When all preparations were complete, he informed the messenger from the enemy that he had accepted their proposal. They were told that the Guru's treasure would leave the township to be followed after some time by him and his people. The

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enemy received this information with great joy. At the appointed hour of the night, the Guru called for the loaded bullocks, tied lighted torches to their horns and sent them out at midnight along with some Sikhs to accompany them. When the enemy saw the train bearing the treasure emerging from the township, they forgot all their pledges and fell upon the small party of the Sikhs to loot the treasure.[46] But their disappointment was great when they found that the treasure was nothing but tatters and rubbish. After exposing the treachery of the enemy, the Guru, according to Koer Singh, addressed his Sikhs in the following words :

> Never true to their words are these hill *rajas*, you know not their deceptions, they are all big cheats unworthy of trust.[47]

Wazir Khan expressed regret for the misconduct of some of his troops and delivered a letter to the Guru. This letter bearing the seal of Emperor Aurangzeb contained many assurances for the safe passage of the Sikhs out of Anandpur Sahib.[48] The Sikhs who were already anxious to leave the township, became very vocal and active. They approached Mata Gujri and pleaded with her. The Guru, however, felt that the promises of the Mughals were simply ploys to dupe the Sikhs. Ultimately the Guru took the decision to evacuate the fort and the city, albeit against his wishes and better judgement. Some scholars have wrongly surmised that the Guru's action smacked of acquiescence. In fact, the offer of safe passage was made by Wazir Khan and the hill *rajas* with the full knowledge that the Guru would never surrender, and the Guru's decision was prompted more by his determination to die fighting than by the promise held out to him by the Mughals.

The Guru evacuated Anandgarh and Anandpur Sahib on December 5-6, 1704 CE (6-7 *Poh*, 1762 BK). Just before this, the Guru distributed the valuables as well as arms among the Sikhs.[49]

The moment the enemy got an inkling of the departure of the Sikhs, they forgot all about their vows,[50] and set out in hot pursuit immediately. Skirmishes commenced from Kiratpur onwards. Realising the impending danger, Sri Guru Gobind Singh gave a band of 50 Sikhs to Bhai Udey Singh,[51] and charged him with the responsibility of checking the enemy's advance.[52] Bhai Udey Singh fought at Shahi Tibbi a bloody battle with the enemy with a handful of his men; all of them perished fighting, covering themselves with immortal glory. The battle lasted for two and a half hours.[53]

When the battle of Shahi Tibbi was in progress, the rest of the caravan including Sri Guru Gobind Singh had reached the bank of the Sarsa river. It was now almost daybreak. About this time the news arrived that a contingent of enemy troops was fast approaching. Bhai Jiwan Singh,[54] a prominent Sikh, was given a band of 100 Sikhs and ordered to encounter the pursuers. With the rest of his people the Guru descended into the flooded waters of the Sarsa. The flood was so fierce that many of them were drowned and many more were swept away, and many, including members of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's own family were separated from the main group. Besides, there was heavy loss of valuable literature and property. It was here that the Guru's mother, revered Mata Gujri and his two younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh

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Singh, got separated. They proceeded to Saheri, the village of their domestic servant, Gangu Brahmin, who handed them over to the police at Morinda to be taken to Sirhind, where they were cruelly put to death by Wazir Khan, in spite of the protests of the then nawab of Malerkotla.[55] Mata Sundar Kaur and Mata Sahib Kaur were hurriedly led by Bhai Mani Singh to Delhi, where they stayed in the house of Jawahar Singh.[56] As regards the Guru himself, he was able to reach, accompanied by his two elder sons and a band of veteran Sikhs, the village Ghanaula[57] on the other side of the Sarsa. It was now planned to proceed further to Kotla Nihang Khan and pass the day safely in the residence of the Pathan *zamindar* Nihang Khan who, being a sincere follower of the Guru, could be depended upon for help. Apprehending that the route ahead might be beset with danger, the Guru set apart a band of about 100 veterans including Sahibzada Ajit Singh under the command of Bhai Bachittar Singh and instructed them to march by the direct route, whereas he along with some of his people preferred to take the longer path along the left bank of the Satluj river. The Guru met no resistance on the way and reached Kotla Nihang Khan safely. Bachittar Singh and his men, however, had to fight their way through a cordon of the Ranghars of Malikpur, a village on the way, and Pathans of Ropar. In the fierce fighting that took place on this occasion, the majority of the Sikhs received martyrdom. The leader, Bachittar Singh, was mortally wounded, and in that serious condition was carried to Kotla Nihang Khan by Sahibzada Ajit Singh.

The Guru did not want to stay at Kotla Nihang Khan longer than was absolutely necessary. He decided to proceed further on the same day. Sahibazada Ajit Singh, Sahibazada Jujhar Singh and forty Sikhs were to accompany him. When the night fell, the whole band set out on the onward journey. Nihang Khan detailed his son, Alam Khan, to guide them as to the route they were to follow.

When Guru Gobind Singh left Kotla Nihang Khan, his object, it seems, was to proceed to Machhiwara and Raikot. At the former place lived two Pathan brothers Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan. They had trade dealings with the Guru, and eventually had become his followers. Moreover, they happened to be cousins of Nihang Khan and as such could be depended upon. The second place, Raikot, was under the control of Rai Kalla, whose daughter had been married to Alam Khan, the son of Nihang Khan. Besides, Rai Kalla had also become a follower of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Another reason for the Guru to select this route was that the sixth, seventh and ninth Gurus had already travelled across this area and attracted a good number of local people to the Sikh faith.

After Kotla Nihang Khan, the village Bur Majra became the halting place of Sri Guru Gobind Singh and his Sikhs. Soon after their arrival there, the news was received that a large body of Sirhind troops was chasing them. Immediately, the Guru decided to face the enemy at Chamkaur. For this purpose, he hurriedly reached the destination and encamped in a garden outside the village.[58]

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Battle of Chamkaur — December 7, 1704 CE

The *zamindar* of the place invited the Guru to come to the village and put his mud *haveli*, also called *garhi* (mud fortress) by locals, at the Guru's disposal.[59] Soon after, the army of the allies closed upon the place. The Guru's army comprised forty men[60] excluding the Guru and his two sons, an infinitesimally small number in comparison to the huge army that surrounded the mud fortress. His weapons of defence and offence were those which he and his men had managed to carry during their exit from Anandpur Sahib. The allied forces attacked the *garhi* by daybreak. The Guru organised all round defence of the *garhi*. He himself occupied a position on the top storey to observe and direct the defence operation as also to shoot his arrows. Out of the forty men about ten were deputed to defend the gate. An equal number were posted in the upper storey to keep a sharp watch on the enemy's movements. The rest took up their positions along the walls to keep vigil so that the enemy did not scale the walls. According to Inayat Khan the compiler of *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, 700 cavalrymen were sent to Chamkaur with arsenal as reinforcement to the army fighting under Wazir Khan.[61]

The enemy then attacked the *garhi* with all the fury and might at their disposal. The enemy made a sudden and concerted attack and the Guru responded to it with a swift counter-attack. Every soldier who advanced from behind the wall was struck by arrows and fell soaked in blood. Nahar Khan also tasted the pinch of a sharp-edged arrow of the Guru, and found safety in flight. Many others followed him, betraying their cowardice. The *khwaja*, seemingly the keyman of the Mughal forces, failed to muster courage to come into the open.[62] Many lives of the Sikhs were lost in this contest. The ammunition ran short two or three hours before the sunset. Now the Guru devised another stratagem. He divided his men into groups, each of whom went out and fought the enemy with their personal weapons, viz., sabre, spear, sword and lance. These groups operated in different directions one after the other to keep the enemy guessing, while themselves fighting on their chosen ground. The aim was that the enemy should not be able to storm the *garhi* that day. Ajit Singh (17 years old) and Jujhar Singh (15 years old) led vigorous attacks and received martyrdom in the process.[63]

By nightfall, thirty five out of forty Sikhs had fallen fighting. Only five Sikhs, Daya Singh, Dharam Singh, Man Singh, Sant Singh and Sangat Singh had survived. They gathered in a group, deliberated upon the situation and then resolved to use the powers which the Guru, five years earlier, had bestowed on the Khalsa when at Anandpur Sahib he had equated the disciples with the Guru. They told the Guru that at that moment they, as representatives of the Khalsa, ordered him to leave the *garhi* in the interest of the *Panth*. Daya Singh, Dharam Singh and Man Singh would accompany him. The remaining two, Sant Singh and Sangat Singh, would stay behind to continue the fight. According to Giani Gian Singh, Sangat Singh, who had facial resemblance with the Guru put on a dress similar to that of the Guru, and seated himself at the place in the upper storey which the Guru had occupied during the daytime.[64] The enemy concentrated their attention on him, considering him to be their ultimate target. The Guru refused to leave and resolved to die fighting. But ultimately he left the

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fortress, for he could not have refused the *hukamnama* of the *Panj Piaré*.

Now the three, namely, Daya Singh, Dharam Singh and Man Singh put on the dress of Mughal soldiers and jumped down the outer wall of the mud house. The rendezvous and its distance to the north were decided with the help of a star. Since Anandpur Sahib was already captured, and towards east was the town of Sirhind, a stronghold of the enemy, and on the west lay the river Satluj, a formidable obstacle, it was, therefore, decided to proceed towards the north.

All the three approached the enemy camps from three different directions, i.e., heading towards south, east and west, undetected. Just at the approach of the time which was coordinated, arrows from the *garhi* were shot to extinguish the torches (*mashals*) of the enemy soldiers which were illuminating the *garhi* and its surrounding areas. While running past the enemy camp in the south, east and west, they individually raised loud cries warning that the Guru along with his soldiers was leaving. Since by then there was complete darkness, the allied forces got confused and fell upon each other killing many of their own men. The allied forces deployed towards the north of the *garhi* moved towards the east and west of the *garhi* to capture the Guru. At this moment when there was utter chaos, the Guru moved towards the north and left for the already decided rendezvous.

The allied force commanders unable to apprehend the motive behind the moves of the Sikhs delivered a forceful attack on the *garhi* and had the satisfaction of having killed the Guru who was in fact Sangat Singh. The *garhi* was captured. The Mughal forces' jubilation was unbounded, as they were under the impression that the Guru had been killed. But soon the euphoria evaporated, when they came to know the reality. It was not the Guru but a Sikh of his who had been killed by their arrows.

The Guru had left the fortress under the very nose of the enemy. Wazir Khan and his commanders had to face utter disappointment. They had won the battle but gained nothing.

Thereafter, the Mughals employed all their resources to capture the Guru, but in vain. The Guru had covered quite a long distance during the night on unfamiliar tracks. According to one assessment, the Guru covered sixteen kilometres in unknown terrain full of thorny bushes by night, and reached the predetermined meeting place before dawn.

The Guru's Journey Towards Malwa Desert
A Saga of Fortitude and Suffering

When the Guru reached Jandsar, the Gujjars of village Kiri recognised him and raised an alarm but to no effect.[65] The Guru moved on and reached the village Behlolpur at a distance of three *kos* to the west. From there he reached the wilds of Machhiwara. For days he had had nothing to eat and only a clod of earth to rest upon. The rough and thorny paths had lacerated his limbs. His feet were blistered and clothes torn. But, he was still unshaken. Reclining under a tree in lonely jungle, he sang :

Beloved friend beloved God,

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Thou must hear the servant's plight.
When Thou art not near, the comforts' cloak is as a pall of pest,
The home is like a serpent's nest.
The wine chokes like the hangman's noose,
The rim of the goblet is like an assasin's knife,
But with Thee shall I in adversity dwell.
Without Thee life of ease is life in hell.[66]

At Machhiwara, he was joined by Dharam Singh, Man Singh and Daya Singh. But the situation was still grave, because the enemy was in hot pursuit. Realising this, one Gulaba, an old *masand* of Machhiwara took the Guru and his three Sikhs to his residence but soon his courage failed.

At this juncture, two Pathan brothers, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, who used to visit Anandpur Sahib in connection with their horse trade, and had become followers of the Guru, waited upon him. The Guru obliged them by agreeing to stay at their residence that lay close to that of Gulaba at Machhiwara. The Guru halted there for two days.

According to traditional accounts, with the help of the Pathan brothers and *qazi* Mohammad, the Guru's party managed to escape the Mughal cordon as *Uch da Pir* and his retinue, and reached Ghulal.

From Ghulal, the Guru visited Lall. Here he was served by an orphan boy, Bhag Mal. The Guru was so pleased that he blessed him and uttered that he would be "a person of immense fortune" as his name suggested. The next halts of the Guru were at Katani and Kanech. At Kanech, a *masand* named Fateh Chand avoided him for fear of Wazir Khan. He felt so demoralised that he did not part with his mare, pretending that his son-in-law had taken it.[67]

From Kanech, the Guru reached Sahnewal whose *panchayat* hesitated to meet the Guru. However, when he was about to leave, the people including women-folk of the village came forward to offer apology and to pay him respects. The Guru blessed them, and moved on to village Mohi near Jodhan, wherefrom he proceeded to Heiran through village Seloani. There lived Kirpal Das,[68] a devoted disciple of Udasi *mahant* of the same name who had proved his mettle as a warrior in the battle of Bhangani.[69] He accorded a warm welcome to the Guru. On his imploring the Guru decided to stay with him. Here he wrote a *hukamnama* commanding his followers always to hold Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan in high esteem, for they had rendered him selfless and altruistic service.[70] The Pathan brothers thereafter returned to their homes, gratified and content.

From this place, the Guru proceeded to village Lamma where the people, who had already embraced Sikhism, received him with utmost courtesy. From Lamma the Guru reached Raikot, the chief of which, Rai Kalla, was the Guru's devotee and a close relation of Nihang Khan. He knew the imperial orders regarding the Guru, but he was not at all afraid. On the contrary, when he heard all that the Guru had borne, tears streamed from his eyes. According to Bhai Santokh Singh, he waited upon the Guru at Seloani, and requested him to visit Raikot.[71] Now when the Guru visited Raikot, he left

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no stone unturned to provide comfort to the Guru. The Guru granted Rai Kalla an excellent sword in recognition of his selfless service.[72] At the Guru's behest, he sent Nura Mahi to Sirhind to fetch news about the other members of his family.

Not long after, Mahi delivered the news of what had happened to the Guru's family members after he left Anandpur Sahib. He told that in the confusion that prevailed in the wake of the Guru's departure from the town, Mata Gujri and his two sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh (aged nine and seven years, respectively) had nowhere to go until their Brahmin cook, Gangu, offered to take them to his village Saheri. They accompanied him to his house, where he turned perfidious and deceitful, for booty expected from the Mughals and also to appropriate the valuables with Mata Gujri. Having stolen the bag of Mata Gujri, he informed the Mughal officials, Jani Khan and Mani Khan of Morinda that the Guru's mother and his two younger sons were staying at his place. The officials at once took them in their custody, and passed them on to Sirhind, the headquarters of Nawab Wazir Khan. Gangu also went to Sirhind where his services were appreciated by the nawab. Mata Gujri and her grandsons were imprisoned in a tower of the fort called *Thanda Burj* or the Cold Tower, which was extreme torture in the height of winter for an eighty year old lady and two children.

Wazir Khan, who was an inveterate foe of the Guru, and was cursing his fate for his failure to capture the Guru, now found an opportunity to settle scores with him, albeit vicariously and unethically by exercising his authority on the little children. But they remained unflinching. A death sentence was eventually awarded. Nawab Sher Muhammad of Malerkotla protested that it would be improper to harm the innocent children. Wazir Khan, however, ordered them to be bricked alive if they refused conversion. They were kept in the Cold Tower in the severe winter of 1704 CE for another two days. On the third day, under the orders of Wazir Khan, the masons started to brick them alive. However, as the masonry reached above their chest height, they were once again offered the choice of conversion or death. Again they chose the latter, and fearlessly faced the executioner's sword.[73] The aged Mata Gujri, who had all along been confined in the Cold Tower only a little distance away, breathed her last as the news reached her. The dead bodies were kept for the night at a spot now called Bimangarh, just outside the fort walls, and were cremated the following day by Seth Todar Mal,[74] a wealthy merchant of Sirhind.

Mahi also told how Mata Sundar Kaur and Mata Sahib Kaur were escorted to Delhi by Bhai Mani Singh and were staying at a place, which now houses the Mata Sundri College. The Guru received the tragic news with amazing courage and equanimity. Mahi also hinted that there was a rumour at Sirhind that Wazir Khan would soon mount an expedition in search of the Guru. Realising that the territory around Raikot was not a suitable place from security point of view, the Guru decided to move to Lakhi Jungle after a 16-day stay with Rai Kalla.[75]

The Guru's next important halt was at Lopokian, after which he stayed at a place which is now called Alamgir.[76] Here, Nagahia Singh, brother of Bhai Mani Singh, presented him a beautiful horse.[77] From this place the Guru proceeded towards Lakhi

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Jungle. Passing through villages of Manuke, Mehdeana, Chakkar and Takhtupura, he reached Dina.

The Guru in Lakhi Jungle

At Dina, about seven *kos* south-west of Takhtupura, a devoted Sikh, Bhai Rama, presented the Guru with a steed of a very high quality. The Guru accepted it, and blessed Bhai Rama. The news of the Guru's arrival soon spread, and the *zamindars* and peasants of the area flocked to him, some to offer the Guru their support and others just to know him and his mission. Some of the influential people, who paid their obeisance were Lakhmir, Shamir, sons of Jodha Rai, who had embraced Sikhism under Sri Guru Hargobind, Param Singh and Dharam Singh, the grandsons of Bhai Rup Chand, and Mahant Dayal Puri, who came all the way from Sirhind. The Guru asked the *mahant* to carry out the task of spreading the Guru's message in the area around Sirhind without fear. The Guru stayed there for quite a few days.

The Guru around this time received a message from Aurangzeb, most probably as a reply to his letter, *Fatehnama*. The original letter of invitation is not available in any of the collections of his *Ruqat*, *Ahkam* or *Arqan* nor do we have any details of its contents. The twenty eighth *sakhi* of the *Sakhi Pothi*, *Sau Sakhi* MS 79 contains a brief summary of it. According to it, *parwanas* were issued to the Guru saying :

> There is only one kingdom, seeing the *parwana* you better immediately come here. Our religious sentiments are the same. If not I will come myself. The awe and superiority of saintliness will then have gone. You may live in the kingdom as other saints and devotees live.

To this, continues the *sakhi*, were added some words of arrogance, usual with the style of the royal *parwanas*, that the kingdom had been bestowed upon him by God.[78]

The Guru, in response to the message, wrote a letter bearing the title *Zafarnama* in which he underlined the perjury of the Mughal officials and the need of emperor's paying personal attention to his (emperor's) affairs.[79] The letter was taken to the emperor by Bhai Daya Singh.

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. Sukha Singh, Bhai : *Gurbilas Pathshahi Dasvin*, XIII, 9.
   Sainapat : *Gursobha*, VIII, 40, XI, 5, 6, edited by Shamsher Singh Ashok, Sikh History Research Board, 1967.
2. We have not been able to identify the hill states to which they belonged.
3. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : *Guru kian Sakhian*, edited by Piara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1991, *Sakhi* 64, p. 129.
4. Macauliffe, M.A. : *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, pp. 124-126.
5. Raja Bhim Chand had abdicated in 1691 CE soon after the reverses at Nadaun.
6. Macauliffe, M.A. : op.cit., Vol. V, p. 126.
7. *Bhat Vahi Tomar Binjlauton ki* as quoted in Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., *Sakhi* 66, p. 130.
8. *Bhat Vahi Jado Bansian ki*, *Khata Barhtié Kanaunton ka* as quoted in Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 131.

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9. *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind, Khata Jalhané Puaron ka.*
10. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 132.
11. Ibid., p. 134.
12. He was the grandson of Bhai Salho. Refer to *Guru Pad Prem Sagar* of Bawa Sumer Singh, 1882. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 133.
13. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 135, *Sakhi*, 67. Sumer Singh, Bawa : op. cit., p. 4.
14. Ibid., p. 135; also consult *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind, Khata Jalhano ka.*
15. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 136; also consult *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind Khata Jalhano ka.*
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 137.
18. Ibid.
19. Banerjee I.B. : op. cit., II, p. 128. Sainapat : op.cit., p. 45.
20. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 137, *Sakhi* 69.
21. Ibid., p. 138.
22. Sainapat : op. cit., stanza 345, pp. 64-65.
23. Kartar Singh : *Life of Guru Gobind Singh.* "The hill *rajas* wrote a letter to the *faujdar* of Sirhind asking for his help against the Guru." p. 181. Sainapat : op. cit., stanzas 345-351, pp. 64-65. Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa.* "Aurangzeb himself is said to have sent an order to Wazir Khan to proceed against the Guru." p. 915. Santokh Singh, Bhai : *Suraj Parkash*, pp. 2642-48.
24. Sainapat : op. cit., chapter 9, stanza 351, p. 65.
25. Ibid.
26. Kartar Singh : op. cit.
27. Sainapat : op. cit., p. 69.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Basohli fell in the territory of Jaswan.
31. Sainapat : op. cit., chapter X, stanza 90, p. 72.
32. He was the son of Prem Chand and grandson of Moola — *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind Khata Jalhano ka.*
33. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 128-37.
34. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op.cit., *Sakhi* 72, p. 142. The date of this event is given by Sarup Singh Kaushish as *Chetar Vadi Panchmi Sammat* 1757 BK (1700 CE).
35. Sainpat : *Gursobha*, edited by Harnam Singh, pp. 55-57, 62-65.
36. This date is given by Khazan Singh in his book, *History and Philosophy of Sikhism*, Vol. I.
37. *Jaisi baché meri handi,*
    Waise bachéghi teri Mandi.
    Mandi ko jab luténgé,
    To asmani golé chhuténgé.
    Lepel Griffin : *Rajas of the Punjab*, pp. 580-81.
    Hutchison, and Vogel : *History of the Punjab Hill States*, p. 389.
    Rose, H.A. : *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and the North Western Frontier Province*,

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Vol. I, p. 691.

38. Gupta, Hari Ram : *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 286.
39. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., pp. 153-54. Sayyed Beg threw away his sword and vowed never to use it against the Sikhs again. See *Sakhi Pothi*, p. 59.
40. Ibid., pp. 154-55.
41. Ibid.
42. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 154.
43. Ibid.
44. We are not sure whether direct representation was made, but it is certain that the emperor had sent orders to the Mughal officials notably to Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind.
    Harisi, Mirza Muhammad : *Ibratnama*, S.H.R. MS # 231, pp. 66, 67.
    Ahmed Shah : *Tarikh-i-Hind*, S.H.R. MS # 1291, p. 383.
    Ganesh Das : *Twarikh-i-Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab*, S.H.R. MS # 553, p. 158.
45. Ganda Singh : *Hukamnamé*, Punjabi University, p. 181, *Hukamnama* no. 60.
46. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 175.
47. Koer Singh : *Gurbilas*, p. 155-56.
48. According to Hari Ram Gupta the letter was delivered by Wazir Khan himself, vide *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 290; *Zafarnama*, verses 5, 13-15; Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 980, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala.
    Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., pp. 5843-44, 5852-53.
    According to Santokh Singh, Aurangzeb writes : "I have sworn on *Al Quran* not to harm thee. If I do, may I not find a place in God's court hereafter. Cease warfare and come to me. If thou desire not to come hither, then go wheresoever thou pleasest."
    The envoy who presented the letter added : "O Guru, all who go to the emperor's court praise thee. On that account the emperor feeleth certain that an interview with you will add to his happiness. He has sworn by Muhammad and called God to witness that he will not harm thee. The hill *rajas* have also sworn by the cow and called their idols to witness that they will allow thee safe conduct. Bear not in mind anything that hath occurred. The attack on thine oxen was not prompted by any *raja*. The attackers have been generally punished, and the ring-leaders are in prison. No one now, O True Guru, dareth do thee any harm; wherefore evacuate the fort, at any rate for the present, and come with me to the emperor. Thou mayest afterwards do what thou pleasest."
49. Satokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., p. 5848.
50. Sainapat : *Gursobha*, XI, 64/467.
    Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., p. 5855. The vows were most wantonly violated and to this we have references in the *Zafarnama*. Sainapat also refers to violation of oath by imperial officers.
51. Bhai Udey Singh was the son of Bhai Mani Singh of Aliwal (*Shaheed Bilas Bhai Mani Singh* edited by Giani Garja Singh).
52. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., Vol. XIII, pp. 5863-64.
    Sainapat : op. cit., 83, XII, 2/469.
53. Sainapat : op. cit., 83, XII, 4/479.
54. Bhai Jaita's name after initiation.
55. Khan, Inayat Ali : *Description of the Principal Kotla Afghans*, pp. 13-14.
56. Lachhman Singh : *Guru Gobind Singh*, 1909, p. 105.
57. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., p. 5858.
58. Sainapat : op. cit., p. 83, stanza, 473.

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59. The author of *Gursobha* writes that the owner of the *Haveli* welcomed the Guru. Sukha Singh, (the author of *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, pp. 372-74), Santokh Singh (op. cit., *Rut* 6, *Ansu* 34) and M.A. Macauliffe (op. cit., Vol. V, p. 186) write that the Sikhs forcibly took possession of that *Haveli* and made its owner captive. Malcolm writes that Chamkaur was the headquarter of a ruler who had gladly handed over the fort to the Guru.
60. Refer to *Zafarnama*, the letter addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb.
61. *Zafarnama*, 19-41. According to *Zafarnama*, the number was 10 *lakh*.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.; Gupta, Hari Ram : op. cit., p. 208.
64. Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, pp. 995-96.
Koer Singh, however, says that it was Sant Singh (Refer to *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, chapter XVI, p. 205, Punjabi University, 1968).
Bhagat Lachhman Singh : *Sikh Martyrs*, p. 67.
Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 190.
65. Fauja Singh (ed.) : *Guru Gobind Singh Marg*, p. 44, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala. According to Dr Hari Ram Gupta, there were two Gujjars, Ramzu and Kalu, who recognised the Guru.
66. *Shabad Hazaré* :
ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਲੁ ਮੁਰੀਦਾ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ।
ਤੁਧ ਬਿਨੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਰਜਾਇਆ ਦਾ ਓਢਣੁ ਨਾਗ ਨਿਵਾਸਾ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਣਾ ।
ਸੂਲ ਸੁਰਾਹੀ ਖੰਜਰ ਪਿਯਾਲਾ ਬਿੰਞ ਕਸਾਇਯਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਹਿਣਾ ।
ਯਾਰੜੇ ਦਾ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੱਥਰ ਚੰਗਾ ਭੱਠ ਖੇੜਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਣਾ ।
67. Nara, Ishar Singh : *Safarnama*, *Zafarnama*, pp. 227, 228.
Fauja Singh : op.cit., p. 40.
Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 193.
68. Nara, Ishar Singh : op.cit., p. 229.
Gian Singh, Giani : *Gurdham Sangreh*, p. 137.
69. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit., *Rut* 6, *Ansu* 48.
70. Ibid.
71. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op.cit., *Rut* 6, *Ansu* 49.
72. Ibid., *Rut* 6, *Ansu* 53.
While leaving Raikot, Sri Guru Gobind Singh presented a sword to Rai Kalla (Rai Shahbaz Khan) with the injunction that it should not be worn or carried except in battle or in some great emergency. (Punjab Government Records 22-9-1954). The family of Rai preserved this sword with care. Many Sikh chiefs including Maharaja Ranjit Singh tried to procure this sword but they refused to part with the treasured possession. On the death of Rani Bhag Bharee, the widow of Rai Ilyas Khan in April 1854, Rai Imam Bakhsh who inherited the family property, handed over the sword to Mr. Henry Brereton, the then Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana, for presentation to the Governor General. (Based on the findings of Nahar Singh.)
73. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 189.
"It is a general belief among the Sikhs that the children were bricked into a wall and suffered to die in that position but the authors of *Suraj Parkash* and the *Gurbilas* both state that the children were put to death in the order of their ages by the sword of a *Ghalzai* executioner."
Sainapat merely states that Jujhar Singh gave a fitting reply which put the nawab and his courtiers into extreme uneasiness and that the two boys chose the path of martyrdom for the sake of religion as their grandfather had done (*Gursobha*, XI).
Also see Irvine : *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 88.

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74. Ram Kishan, Hakim : *Janamsakhi Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 145.
75. Local tradition.
76. Containing nothing except bushes and *kikar* trees.
77. Nara, Ishar Singh : op. cit., p. 236.
    Gian Singh, Giani : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa.*
78. Avtar Singh : *Sakhi Pothi*, translated & edited, pp. 60-63, 112-113.
79. *Zafarnama*, stanzas 63, 54, 56.

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16

NANAK X
— THE LAST PHASE —

Zafarnama

Zafarnama is a letter written by Sri Guru Gobind Singhin reply to the oral and written communication from Aurangzeb, which he received at village Dina. This was composed in chaste Persian.

In stanza number one to stanza number twelve, the Guru's unshakable faith in God is amply manifest. He extols Him as Eternal, Merciful, Bounteous, Benign, Dispenser of Justice, Holy Refuge, Guide, True King, Radiant, Sublime, Wise, Provider of Livelihood, Caretaker of the humble, low and lost, Vanquisher of foe, Solution of all woes and troubles, Designer of Supreme Laws of Nature and of the Universe, Chastiser of foes,[1] Fearless, Formless, Incomparable, Mightiest of all,[2] Carefree[3] Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.

The Guru's invocation to such a God of myriad attributes and functions instills in him an unbending moral spirit, always egging him on to function in the world without any fear, as also to advise and warn people, including the emperors, to tread the righteous path.

He, therefore, makes bold to criticise Aurangzeb for his unethical conduct. He tells him frankly and fearlessly that he, his *diwans* and *bakhshis*, officials of the highest rung in the Mughal bureaucracy, were liars, had no qualms, and cared a fig even for oaths on the *Quran*, and that he (Aurangzeb) himself was a defier of his religion, worshipper of mammon and a veritable pledge-breaker. He also points out that his pledges on the *Quran*, in fact, were snares to entrap the people, one such snare being his word that the Guru would not be harmed if he vacated Anandpur Sahib.

From stanzas 19-44, the Guru gives a brief account of his battle. He describes how he had to face a disproportionately large number of Mughal troops, and how he lost thirty seven of his followers including his two elder sons, Baba Ajit Singh (aged 17) and Baba Jujhar Singh (aged 14). In these stanzas he also mentioned that he killed Nahar Khan, a Mughal general, and that he and his Sikhs kept at bay the enemy for almost the whole day. Though the Mughal soldiers, attired in black, made furious charges, shouting and shrieking like a swarm of bees, yet the Khalsa held them in

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check, and that the moment anyone left his defence in an attempt to commit offence, he was laid in a pool of blood by an arrow. But how long could the Khalsa, only forty strong, tired and hungry, hold against the countless numbers of the hordes of the enemy ? Ultimately, except three, all fell fighting. In the critical hours, God led the Guru out of the fort to a place of safety. The Guru did not suffer even a scratch on his person in the process.

The Guru reminds in stanza 75, that no doubt, Aurangzeb had claimed four tender lives, the four children of the Guru, yet the spirit of the Guru was as high as ever, and that the coiled cobra of deadly stings was very much alive in the form of Singhs. The Guru also warns him to be prepared for justice on the Day of Judgement for all the atrocious acts committed by him. His professions of adherence to the tenets of his faith were a mere fraud, because without the least qualms, he had broken the most solemn words pledged on the *Quran*.

To further arouse his conscience, the Guru refers to the fact that the emperor sided with the crafty hill chieftains, who were idolaters fighting against him, an iconoclast (metaphorically speaking) like the emperor. The Guru in his sweep clearly hints at the real causes that led to confrontation between the hill *rajas* and the Guru.

Particular emphasis is, therefore, laid on the need for an upright and ethical conduct on the part of an individual. Aurangzeb is strongly condemned not only for his dastardly designs, but also for the dishonest, unethical and immoral means that he invariably employed to wrest some advantage over his adversaries. In this strain the Guru speaks the following words :

> You (Aurangzeb) are not sincere in your affirmations to the tenets of your faith. A man who is not true to his words, stands condemned, and is rejected as a counterfeit coin by man and God both.[4]

The officials of Aurangzeb had forced an unjust war on Sri Guru Gobind Singh, and had broken religious vows. If all this was done with the emperor's approval, then he could not boast of being a believer in God. He should have remembered the True Lord, if in the life hereafter, he wished Him to remember the emperor. By ignoring the dictates of justice, Aurangzeb had shown himself to be a stranger to real statesmanship as well as to God. In possession of immense power, he should not have forgotten that power was entrusted to the ruler for protecting the innocent people, and not for spilling their blood.

A very important undercurrent of *Zafarnama* is that the righteous cause must be upheld, and that forces of unrighteousness must be resisted, even with the use of arms as a last resort. The sanction for the use of arms is given in the oft-quoted stanza of *Zafarnama*, namely :

> When the affairs are past redemption,
> By all other means of peaceful intention,
> It is just to assert the right,
> Through thy sword and a righteous fight.[5]

Unfortunately, it is not understood in proper perspective. The message of the stanza is

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two-pronged; bloodshed be avoided as far as possible, but at the same time, the cause should not be abandoned merely because, as a last resort, it warrants the use of force. The use of arms is allowed for a noble cause, after all other peaceful means for resolving the crises have been exhausted. A very clear implication that, in such circumstances, the use of force, as an unavoidable ultimate necessity, must be limited to the bare minimum, prominently pops out of these popular lines for all sensitive minds to take note of.

The *Zafarnama* contains 111 stanzas. Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharam Singh (according to *Sri Gur Sobha* by Sainapat, Daya Singh and his five companions), were deputed to deliver the letter personally to Aurangzeb at Ahmednagar. They reached Ahmednagar after considerable difficulty and succeeded in handing over the letter to the emperor.

Dr Anil Chander Banerjee is of the opinion that "the original text of the letter is no longer available." He bases his conclusion on the ground that "it is unusual to compose diplomatic communication in the style and form of *Zafarnama*. *Zafarnama* is written in a 'dramatic form' in verse in the manner in which the Persian *Masnavis*, as also the *Shahnama*, are composed. Diplomatic letters are not composed as such."

Zafarnama was not a diplomatic letter in the sense diplomacy is often understood. Had it been so, the Guru would not have called a spade a spade and peeled skin after skin of pretensions, fraud and hypocrisy of the emperor, nor would he have asked him to look inwards at his own moral conscience and also to ponder upon the inexorable laws of God, which always go against those who are unethical in the performance of duties.

In Lakhi Jungle

From Dina, the Guru occasionally went out and visited a few places in the neighbourhood. Two such places were Manan and Bhadaur.

While yet at Dina, the Guru came to learn that his whereabouts had become known to the Mughal government of Sirhind. From then onwards he started looking for some other suitable place where he could better meet the challenge of the enemy; no less was his keenness to inculcate in the minds of the people the spirit of *dharamyudh*, war of righteousness. Against this backdrop, the Guru decided to enter Lakhi Jungle.[6]

The Guru left Dina, and travelled through the villages. He visited Bander, Bargarh, Saravan. At Saravan the Guru gave people a little practice in arrow-shooting. Then he proceeded to Jaito. Therefrom the Guru went to Kotla Maluk Das and Lambhawali and reached Kot Kapura situated 13 *kos* (26 km) in the north. It was situated on a promontory in a big pond and was admirably suited to stand a siege or an attack. Probably, the pursuing enemy forces had come too near by now. Chaudhri Kapura, a Brar Jat, was asked to lend the use of his fort for a few days. Fearing the wrath of the Mughals, however, he politely refused to oblige.[7] So, the Guru proceeded to Dhilwan Sodhian (present-day Dhilwan Kalan) six kilometers from Kot Kapura where Sodhi Kaula, descendant of Pirthi Chand, the elder brother of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, received

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the Guru with great warmth and cordiality. It was here, as the tradition goes, that the Guru took off his blue robes, which he had been wearing ever since he left Machhiwara, and tearing them off into small pieces consigned them, one by one, to fire.

Chaudhri Kapura, now repentant for his earlier disgraceful act, came to see the Guru and asked for his forgiveness. The Guru pardoned him, and he provided the Guru with a good guide, Chaudhri Khana, with whose assistance the Guru marched westward in the direction of Dhab Khidrana. On the way, he passed through Ramina, Mallan, Gauri, Sanghar and Kaoni.

Meanwhile hundreds of his followers had collected around the Guru. Among them were a large number of Majhails, people of the Majha region, the country lying between Beas and Ravi rivers, who came to the Guru to pay their respects and also to condole the death of his sons and his mother.

The Guru received them warmly and counseled them to keep cool. In stead of being sad and anguished, they should learn to respect the Will of God.

On this occasion, the Guru composed the verse, translated below :

To Lakhi Jungle repaired the Khalsa,
Irresistible was the Guru's call
They paused not for food or drink and rushed to their
beloved Guru like the buffaloes running to their master at his nod
One waited not for another
Such eagerness swayed their hearts.
Gone was pain of separation,
Perfect union prevailed,
Overwhelming was their gratefulness.[8]

Battle of Muktsar — December 29, 1705 CE

The Guru, apprehending the advance of Mughal forces, crossed the Lakhi Jungle to reach a place known as Khidrana[9] which was famous for its lake. The Guru planned the defence in such a way that it should not be easy for the enemy to capture the pool, which was the only source of water in that area. He himself took up position on an elevated mound and his Sikhs took theirs in bushes, around it.

The troops of Wazir Khan marched towards Khidrana striking fear and convulsion on the way. As the Mughal forces reached near Khidrana, forty men of Majha region challenged them.[10] These men had left the Guru during the siege of Anandpur Sahib. When they had reached their home, they were chided and taunted by their own women for deserting the Guru in the hour of difficulty. The taunts of their near and dear ones, coupled with their own profound sense of remorse, impelled them to recompense for their selfishness and cowardice. Accordingly, they set out towards the Guru who was then in the jungles of Malwa. As they approached Khidrana, they came to know that the Mughal forces, under the command of Wazir Khan, were advancing to attack the Guru who had just encamped around Khidrané-di-Dhab. They decided to block them on the eastern side just outside Khidrana. This happened on the December 29, 1705

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CE (*Magh Vadi* 10, 1762 BK). In the battle that ensued these forty Sikhs, led by Mahan Singh and inspired by revered Mai Bhag Kaur, fought heroically. In order that the enemy might not reach Khidrana, they resorted to subtle tactics. They spread loose cloth sheets on bushes to give impression to the enemy that a large force under the Guru was camping there.[11] They took positions among the bushes and readied themselves to accord a hot welcome to the enemy. When the enemy's troops came near, they assaulted them so vigorously that they were simply amazed.

The clatter of arms and the din and dust of the battlefield alerted the Guru, who showered arrows from his position, and when the enemy distanced itself from the farthest extent of the range of his arrows, he mounted his steed and moved hither and thither to aim his arrows accurately.

The Mughal soldiers got confused and bewildered. The forty fought with rare valour and determination, and having exhausted their ammunition and quivers of arrows were obliged to take recourse to their spears and swords. Small bands advanced, engaging the enemy in hand-to-hand fight, killing several times their own number, until they were killed or mortally wounded.[12] Mai Bhag Kaur, too, was seriously injured. The Mughal forces were soon in dire straits. They were already fatigued due to their long march and scarcity of provisions and water. But now, when they found themselves face to face with determined Khalsa engaged in pitched battle, they felt completely exhausted and exasperated. Another factor also tired their verve. The main body of the Khalsa, under the command of the Guru, was fresh with sufficient war materials and in possession of the only source of water that lay in the vicinity of Khidrana. Better provisioned and better stationed, the Khalsa force obviously enjoyed a psychological edge over the Mughal soldiers. The net result of this was that Wazir Khan decided not to pursue the Guru further.

Wazir Khan's return to Sirhind without striking the main body of the Khalsa forces was considered a great victory among the Khalsa. The Guru's prestige and popularity increased manifold. His mission also received stimulus. According to Colonel Ravi Batra, the Mughal forces numbered twenty thousand, while[13] the Khalsa forces numbered only two thousand including cavalry and the irregulars.[14]

After the Mughal forces had left the field, the Guru visited the scene of actual battle and with a fatherly affection went about lifting the heads of the martyrs in his lap wiping their faces and blessing them one by one.[15] When it was the turn of Bhai Mahan Singh to be thus caressed and blessed, the Master found that he was still alive, Bhai Mahan Singh opened his eyes and found himself in the lap of the Guru. He was filled with supreme joy. The Guru asked him if he had any desire to be fulfilled. Bhai Mahan Singh said,[16] "No, father, I have seen thee. What else or more could I desire ? But if thou hast taken compassion on us, then tear off our disclaimer."[17] The Guru at once acceded to his request and remarked, "You have saved the root of Sikhism in Majha. You and your companions, all forty of you are *muktas* or 'the emancipated ones', delivered from the cycle of births and deaths for ever." Then the Guru went to the place where Bhag Kaur[18] was lying unconscious on account of her wounds. A little

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medical aid brought her back to consciousness. She told the Master the whole story of the repentant forty. The Guru told her about the last prayer of Mahan Singh, to tear off the disclaimer.

The Guru was greatly pleased with Bhag Kaur for what she had done. She was removed from the battlefield and her wounds were tended. After her recovery, Bhag Kaur chose to stay with the Guru. She led the Sikh way of life in totality. After the Guru's death at Nanded, she left for Bidar where she breathed her last.[19]

Khidrané-di-Dhab, pool at Khidrana, also known as Ishar Sar was at that time renamed as Muktsar, Tank of Salvation. The event held out a great lesson and a sublime moral. Turning back on the Guru was a blasphemy, while turning towards the Guru was a pious and meritorious act. The event also held out hope to all those who would wish to reunite themselves to the Guru, as Guru is an eternal forgiver.

The Guru renovated and enlarged the tank near the field of the battle. People believed that whosoever bathed in it would get salvation. Later on, a gurdwara was built at the site of the cremation of the forty *muktas*. The area occupied by these shrines is called Tutti Ganddi, symbolising that the breach was healed and the lost were retrieved. A great fair is held there on the first of *Magh* every year in memory of the great event. The village also came to be known as Muktsar. It lies 50 kilometers south-east of Ferozepur.

From Muktsar, the Guru moved to Rupana, Bhander, Gurusar and Thehri, Bambiha, Rohila and Jangiana and Bhai Ka Kot which had been founded by Bhai Bhagtu. From there, he moved on to Kot Sahib Chand and further on to Chatiana where Brars who had fought for him demanded the arrears of their pay under threat of blocking his onward march. But by God's grace, it so happened that a devoted Sikh from the neighbouring area brought enough money about the same time, which enabled the Guru to pay off all the arrears. The leader of the Brars, Chaudhri Dana, was extremely sorry for the insolence and impudence of his people and refused to get any payment for himself. His act of self-abnegation greatly impressed the Guru, who on his request immediately agreed to visit his native place, Mehma Swai. The journey lay through Ablu, a place founded by an uncle of Dana. Reaching Mehma Swai, the Guru encamped at the place now called Lakhisar and from there made a visit to Dana's home and several other places around. After a few days at Lakhisar, the Guru decided to go to Talwandi Sabo at the request of Chaudhri Dalla. He took the same old route and once again passing through Chatiana, Kot Sahib Chand and Kot Bhai arrived at Giddarbaha, and then paying short visits to Rohilla, Jangiana, Bambiha, Bajak, Kaljhirani, Jassi Bagwali, Pakka Kalan and Chak Hira Singh, reached Talwandi Sabo now called Damdama Sahib or Takht Sri Damdama Sahib. The place appealed to the Guru so much that he decided to make it his headquarters. The Guru reached here on January 17, 1706 CE and stayed up to October 30, 1706 CE. At this place Mata Sundar Kaur and Mata Sahib Kaur alongwith Bhai Mani Singh came from Delhi.[20] After obeisance and greetings Mata Sundar Kaur said, "My Lord, where are my sons ? Where have they been left ?" The Guru consoled her and, pointing towards the Khalsa, remarked, "The

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four sons have been offered as a sacrifice over these sons. What does it matter if we have lost four sons while thousands like them are alive and are in thine lap and mine."

These words of the Guru had their instant effect. The mother's sadness vanished and a new realization dawned on her. Now she was altogether changed; she realised that death in the cause of righteousness is in fact a rejoicing in the *Hukam* of God.

Damdama Period

The period at Damdama was put to best possible use by the Guru. The Guru utilised the time in laying abiding foundations of Sikhism in the Malwa tract. Many old and hereditary Sikhs were given *pahul* and admitted to the Khalsa order including Dalla, the Chaudhri of Talwandi Sabo, Tiloka, the ancestor of the Nabha kings and Rama, the ancestor of Patiala kings, etc. Besides, new converts joined in large numbers. According to Trumpp, their number swelled to one *lakh* twenty thousand.[21]

Talwandi Sabo attracted large crowds from far and near, and presented the spectacle of a new Anandpur Sahib. The Guru made a number of visits to neighbouring villages. In one trip he visited Bhagi Bhander, six kilometres north of Talwandi Sabo, Kot Shamir, six kilometres further north and Chak Bhai Ka, about 40 kilometres from Talwandi Sabo to the north. At the last-named place, the Guru was given a warm reception by Rai Singh, grandson of Bhai Bhagtu. On another occasion, he went to Bathinda city and stayed there for seven days. While coming back to Talwandi, the Guru visited Mahima and Bhakri, both situated to the north of Bathinda. On another occasion, he visited Tala Pind about twenty km to the south. At Kewal, Chaudhris Rama and Tiloka waited upon him.

Sri Guru Gobind Singhwas always alive to the spiritual needs of the people living at far off places. For this purpose, he appointed preachers, as for instance, Bhai Pheru.[22] Sant Punjab Singh[23] and Rocha,[24] initiated at Bathinda, were appointed to disseminate Sikhism in the areas such as Pothohar, Kashmir, and Muzaffarabad. They and their successors continued to preach the Khalsa way of life. All availabe records vouchsafe the veracity of this fact.

Along with his work of administering *pahul* to the Sikhs the Guru strove to bring about a cultural transformation of the people also. The Guru dwelt at length in his discourses to various *sangats* on the futility of totems, esoteric practices, caste-distinctions as well as caste considerations, superstitions, grave-worship and other such practices.

To make preaching effective and to keep it on the right track, it was found essential that a cadre should be raised for exegesis of the compositions enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. According to a Visakha Singh,[25] sixty persons acquired mastery over the subject, the most important of whom was Bhai Mani Singh. Besides this, the Guru created two orders, one of the *nirmalas* and the other of the *gianis*. The former included the five members sent to Benares earlier to learn Sanskrit and acquire knowledge in Hindu philosophical systems. The purpose was to compare Indian religious thought and history side by side with basic tenets of Sikhism.

For the purpose of interpreting *Gurabni* correctly, Sri Guru Gobind Singhhimself

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explained the meaning of the verses enshrined in *Adi Granth* and took steps to ensure that a number of persons acquired proficiency to do the same. Bhai Mani Singh was among the first men who received this training from the Guru. This laid the foundation of the order of *gianis*. This class later on did a lot to ensure correct exposition of the Sikh scripture as it was passed on to its head by the Guru himself. The two headquarters of this order have been at Damdama and Amritsar.

Another important and abiding contribution of the Guru during this period was to prepare authentic copies of the *Adi Granth*.[26] According to Giani Gian Singh, Mani Singh was appointed amanuensis. Every day two watches of time were fixed for this purpose. The project continued for several months, and the resultant recension came to be known as *Damdami Bir*.[27] The *Granth* was named so, because it was originally written at Talwandi Sabo, also known as Sri Damdama Sahib.

The Guru collected a galaxy of scholars, poets and men of arts at Sri Damdama Sahib. Once again, literature began to be created to inspire people and to awaken them to new realities. Literary meets were arranged to bring into focus the process of resurgence started by the Guru and to give fillip to the production of literature to serve both as mirror of the environment and a guide to future generations. Arrangements were also made to impart education to the people. Sukha Singh, says that in addition to the extension of patronage to scholars of different disciplines, he encouraged people to study at the *Ashram*. The tradition revolving round *Likhan Sar* testifies to the ardent desire of the Guru to educate the masses of this area. It will not be wide off the mark to say that the Guru was doing all this under the conviction that literature being produced under Sikh inspiration would help the people to regain the elan essential for any society to move further on the road to progress. It is against this background that the Guru aspired to see 'Talwandi Sabo Ki' as a 'new Kashi' to symbolize the aspirations of the new generation.

Side by side with the above activities, the Guru continued to give military training to his followers and succeeded in rallying round himself a considerable number of armed disciples, ever ready to lay down their lives for the ideals of the Khalsa without any desire for any pecuniary advantage. Efforts were made to inculcate among the Sikhs the spirit of resistance to injustice and unrighteousness, wherever and whenever they occurred. Various methods, such as hunting and mock fights *et al*, were employed to make the Sikhs courageous. The Guru laid special emphasis on alertness and discipline. According to Dr I.B. Banerjee, the Guru's strength increased to a great extent, as, besides regular followers, he had also taken some Dogras and Brars in his service.[28] Koer Singh also testifies to this fact. According to him, "every day the Guru would distribute gold and silver coins, and countless soldiers were attracted to the Guru."[29]

Wazir Khan, the *subedar* of Sirhind Sarkar, was making all out efforts to snuff out the Khalsa movemet and to arrest or kill the Guru. This attitude is clearly manifest in his two messages to Chaudhri Dalla. The gist of the messages was that Dalla should arrest the Guru or else his territory would be plundered and he would be punished severely. Dalla's reply was that of a person surcharged with the mission of translating

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the Khalsa ideals into reality. He said, "I will by no means have the Guru arrested to please thee. Nay, I will defend him with my life." Zabardast Khan, the governor of Lahore, was also averse to the Sikh cause. He plundered a party of Sikhs bound for making offerings to the Guru.

In the face of this attitude of the Mughal officials of Lahore province and Sirhind *sarkar*, the Guru intensified his military preparations. He repeatedly made exhortations to the Sikhs to bear arms and diligently practise their use. The Guru said, "Now that the time has changed and the Sikhs are obliged to defend themselves, Khalsa has been established, and whosoever desires to stay in it should not fear the clash of arms, but be ever ready for the combat and the defence of his faith." At the same time the Remembrance of Name was still the chief object of the Sikh adoration.

It was at Talwandi Sabo that the Guru received the tidings of imperial emissaries deputed to convey Aurangzeb's wish for a personal meeting. Sri Guru Gobind Singh's letter to Aurangzeb appears to have produced the desired effect. In the *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, the receipt of a letter from Sri Guru Gobind Singhis acknowledged by the emperor as also the orders which he issued to Munim Khan (the deputy *subedar*) at Lahore, "to conciliate Sri Guru Gobind Singh, and also to make satisfactory arrangement for his travel towards the south."[30] That Aurangzeb was anxious to meet Sri Guru Gobind Singh is evident from the *Ahkam*, though it is not clear why. Possibly after having perused the Guru's letter a new awareness dawned on him, which prompted him to invite the Guru to find an enduring solution to the Sikh problem. The Guru, in his turn, also welcomed the opportunity and planned to move to Ahmednagar where Aurangzeb had been camping.

The emperor had ordered a letter to be written to Wazir Panah Munim Khan, deputy governor of Lahore to be dispatched through Muhammad Beg, *gurzbardar* and *mansabdar* in which Munim Khan was desired to conciliate the Guru, invite him to his headquarters and then, having conveyed to him the royal *furman*, to send him to the emperor at Ahmednagar, accompanied by a trusted officer of his own and the above-mentioned *gurzbardar* and *mansabdar*. And whenever the Guru arrived in the neighbourhood of Sirhind, wrote the emperor, the Khan was to provide him with an escort and see him off safe beyond his own territories. Munim Khan was further instructed to soothe the Guru if the latter had any secret or open suspicions and to pay to him out of his attached properties as much as he desired for his travelling expenses. With this letter *gurzbardar* and the Guru's messenger Daya Singh moved to the north together.[31]

From Damdama to Bagaur

The Guru left Damdama (Talwandi Sabo) for the Deccan on *Katak Sudi* 5, 1763 BK (October 30, 1706 CE) notwithstanding the warning of some of his disciples against placing any reliance on the treacherous old monarch.[32] The Guru got wind that Daya Singh had to face a lot of difficulties, caused by the obstructionist tactics of *subedar* Wazir Khan's hired persons, who were specially deputed to scuttle the attempts of

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Daya Singh to meet the emperor to deliver the letter personally. The *subedar* did so because he thought that if the Guru's letter and Daya Singh's dialogue with the emperor succeeded in arousing the moral conscience of the emperor, a lot of harm was likely to accrue to him.

The Guru later got inkling that the letter had been delivered and its contents had moved the emperor. The Guru sensing change in the mood of Aurangzeb decided to move towards the Deccan even before Daya Singh could reach Damdama. The most important factor that impelled the Guru to take this decision was the fast failing health of the emperor, who was about ninety one in 1706 CE and had been overtaken by illness. The Guru deemed it appropriate to go to Deccan himself and settle the affairs with the emperor for which purpose Daya Singh had been sent with the letter.[33]

The exact number of those who accompanied the Guru is not known, yet on the basis of accounts available to us, it is not difficult to surmise that the number was quite large. Among them, a few notables were Man Singh, Ram Singh and Fateh Singh of Bhagtu family, Dharam Singh and Param Singh, the sons of Bhai Rupa. Rai Dalla also accompanied the Guru. As the Guru proceeded further, some of them returned to their homes, but even then the core was quite large : Mani Singh, Bhupat Singh from Amritsar, Sodhi Kanwal Nain from Dhilwan, Udey Karan, Gurdas Singh from Doburji, Bhai Bajjar Singh from Sadhaura, Ram Singh and Tilok Singh from Phul, Godaria Singh from Bhuccho, Dan Singh with his son from Ablu, Ram Kaur from Ramdas.[34]

En route to Deccan, the first halt of Sri Guru Gobind Singhwas at village Kewal.[35] Then the Guru sojourned at village Jharori, wherefrom he proceeded to village Jhanda.[36] When the night fell, Fateh Singh and his brother Ram Singh left the Guru's company. Rai Dalla placed his offerings comprising two gold bangles and one double-edged sword, and slipped out of the Guru's camp and returned to his native place. Some others also left the Guru fearing difficulties in the arduous journey. The Guru expressed surprise at the departure of Dalla particularly, because he wished him to prepare himself for certain special assignments. When at dawn, the Guru asked where Dalla was, someone from amongst his followers said, "There is no Dalla, there is only Allah, and the Guru." Thus, at that point of time the Guru was practically alone determined to carry out his mission in spite of high risks involved in the process. The Guru remained calm and continued to march towards his destination.

The Guru reached Sirsa[37] now in the State of Haryana which was a small town then. People expressed their regards for the Guru by serving him and his Sikhs. In the course of his stay, he was told that one goldsmith named Gulab Singh had been imprisoned in an underground cell by Nabi Bhakhsh, the Chaudhri of village Khudal. The reason was that he did not honour the order of the Chaudhri demanding his daughter. The Guru mounted his steed, and taking five Sikhs with him marched to the place. They freed Gulab Singh and chided the Chaudhri, who out of fear prostrated at the Guru's feet. The Guru forgave him and instructed him to stop tyrannizing the people. The Guru having visited neighbouring places such as Gobindpur, came back to Sirsa.

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From there, the Guru reached Nauhar (also spelled as Nohar).[38] Here the people were the votaries of Jainism. Instead of practicing the high ethical principles of their religion, their whole emphasis lay upon rejection of non-vegetarianism, which they thought was the only way on the path to bliss and social reconstruction. The Guru exposed the hollowness of their thinking and tried to make them understand the theory, practice and the futility of non-violence. Vegetarianism or non-vegetarianism are irrelevent to the process of building a good society as well as good individuals.

From Nauhar, the Guru proceeded to village Bhadra[39] where he was affectionately received by a Sikh family. The next halt of the Guru was at village Sahewa (also spelled as Suhewa). During the course of travels, Dharam Singh and Param Singh carried the weapons and clothes of the Guru. They had taken a resolve to prepare a fresh cot for the Guru at his every halt.

The Guru next proceeded to Bahaduran. There he gave horses, one each to Dharam Singh and Param Singh. Thereafter the Guru reached Sahena. From there he proceeded to Madhu Singhnai. Bhai Ram Singh, a scion of Bhai Bhagtu, lost heart and beat a hasty retreat. The Guru sent his horseman thrice to dissuade him from leaving the Guru but he remained adamant.

After this the Guru reached Pushkar Raj,[40] a place of pilgrimage dedicated to Brahma. The place had earlier been hallowed by Guru Nanak. Pandit Chetan Misar, who was in charge of the place, fell at the Guru's feet. In the neighbourhood of Pushkar Raj, the Guru was asked a serious question about his dress, which neither looked Hindu nor Muslim. The Guru impressed upon them that his was a mission both for the Hindus and Muslims and transcended all types of particularism, and consequently his dress exuded uniqueness of its own.

After this, the Guru reached Naraina,[41] also known as Dadudwara, where the saint Dadu had lived and flourished. His shrine, was at that time under the charge of Mahant Jait Ram. One day the Guru saluted the sepulchre of Dadu by lifting an arrow to his head. The Khalsa took exception to it and demanded a *tankhah* (penitence). One of them, Man Singh quoted the Guru's own verse "*Gor marhi mat bhul na manai* — worship not even by mistake cemeteries." The Guru at once accepted the lapse and as an expiation, paid a fine of Rs 125, part of which was spent on *Guru ka langar*, and the rest on the purchase of a canopy to cover the place where food was served. Jait Ram was astonished at the dress and demeanor of the Guru and implored him :

> Lord, no doubt, you have saved Hinduism, but your mode of thinking and style of living do not conform to our religious tradition. Daduji used to say, 'Dadu, surrender thy claim to every worldly thing, pass thy days without claims. How many have departed after trading in this grocer's shop (which is the world).'[42]

The Guru answered :

> Assert thy claim in the world
> Extirpate the wicked who doeth thee evil.

The *mahant* quoted Dadu again :

> Dadu, taking the times as they come;

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Be satisfied with this Kal age.
If anyone throws a clod or a brick at thee,
Lift it on thy head.[43]

The Guru did not agree to the last line and altered it thus :

If anyone throws a clod or a brick at thee,
Strike him with a stone.[44]

Dadu was an ascetic and at best he was concerned with his own liberation. On the other hand, the Guru's house was people's house, and believed in balanced and integrated development of the people both at individual and social levels. Sri Guru Gobind Singh says, "Sikhism promises riddance from all types of tyrannies : social, cultural, political and religious. When Jogis, Brahmins, Khatris, Vaish, and others could not do anything to uplift the people, the Sikh *Panth* came into being. We are committed to reconstruction of society based on dignity of labour, truth, sharing of wealth and having complete faith in *Akal Purkh*." Jait Ram understood the import of the Guru's message and mission and expressed his agreement with him. He was so much overwhelmed that he requested the Guru to have meals at his *Ashram*.

Regarding granting of arms to the Khalsa the Guru explained his position thus :

The age is full of evil. The wicked rule in it, and cause suffering to saints and holy men. Tyrants, therefore, deserve to be punished. They will not refrain as long as they are pardoned. O, *mahant*, they who bear arms, who remember the True Name and sacrifice their lives for their faith shall go straight to paradise. Therefore I have established the Khalsa order, given my followers arms and made them heroes.[45]

After this the Guru reached Kalot, via Lali and Magharoda, where Bhai Daya Singh and Dharam Singh, on their way back from Deccan, met the Guru, and related to him their experiences in the Deccan. The emperor's *gurzbardar* and *mansabdar* had gone ahead towards Delhi with the royal *furman* for Mu'nim Khan, while Daya Singh and Dharam Singh reportedly came to the Guru. After this, the Guru reached Bhagaur, the headquarters of a *pargana* in the erstwhile Udaipur State (about 70 miles north-east of Udaipur city). Here he heard the news of the death of Aurangzeb at Ahmednagar on the 28th of *Zi-Qada*, 1118 AH (February 20, 1707 CE).[46]

The Guru at Agra

A small skirmish in the neighbourhood of Bhagaur, a day or two before the Guru's march in which the two *zamindars* and a couple of Sikhs were killed is said to have taken place on March 17-19, 1707 CE.[47]

Aurangzeb being no more, it was pointless to continue the march towards the south. The Guru, therefore, cancelled his earlier plans.

The war of succession had begun among the late emperor's sons. Prince Muazzam (Bahadur Shah) was in Jamrud, a few miles away from Peshawar when his father died. Azam Shah (Tara Azam) who was in Deccan with his father at the time of his death assumed command of the imperial army and proclaimed himself as the next emperor.

Bahadur Shah too marched from Jamrud to lay his claim to the throne. He left

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Jamrud in the last week of March 1707 CE, and reached Peshawar on the last day of the month. His trusted governor at Lahore, Munim Khan, had kept the troops in readiness for the long-anticipated war of succession, and welcomed Muazzam who was formally declared emperor before he entered Lahore. Collecting men and money from the officials of the Mughal government in that part of the empire, he reached Delhi towards the end of May. Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind, had contributed rupees eight *lakh*. Mohammad Muazzam left Delhi in the first week of June, took possession of the treasures at Agra and moved towards Dholpur to confront Azam Shah, his rival claimant to the throne, who alongwith a huge army and his very intelligent and valorous son, Bidar Bakhat, was fast heading towards this place.

On the way to Delhi, Muazzam, who had first-hand knowledge of the Guru's valour and his influence in the Punjab, especially among the Sikhs, thought it appropriate to seek his help, partly to avoid any Sikh trouble while he was busy in a civil war, and partly to use the Sikhs in his cause. The Guru's contemporary, Sainapat, says that the Guru was approached for help by Muazzam's emissaries.[48] Bhai Jodh Singh, in his work *Kalghi Dhar Hulas*, says that the Prince Muazzam deputed Nand Lal to persuade the Guru to help him with his Sikhs, promising at the same time that he would look into and redress any grievance the Guru might have against his house.[49] The Guru read the letter and also listened to the pleadings of Bhai Nand Lal. Though the Guru was not sure of Bahadur Shah keeping his word after his victory, yet he decided to support him.

While reaching this decision, the Guru seemed to have been actuated by certain considerations. First, Bahadur Shah was a generous, munificent and an extremely good-natured prince. His tolerance and amiability were in great contrast to the bigotry and hypocrisy of his predecessor, Aurangzeb. The Guru had himself seen that in spite of his father's instructions, he had refused to persecute the Guru in 1695 CE. The Guru, therefore, thought that if he won the battle of succession he would be more amenable to liberal influences.

According to the author of the book *Mulakat da Parsang*,[50] Bahadur Shah personally called upon the Guru at Delhi on May 20, 1707 CE to seek his help. The Guru agreed and deputed Kuldipak Singh as a liaison officer who remained with the emperor up to the end of the battle of Jajau on June 8, 1707 CE. He also decided to send some Sikh soldiers under the command of Dharam Singh to side with Bahadur Shah, as a token of his moral support.

The Guru at Delhi first stayed in a house situated behind Humayun's tomb. The gurdwara Damdama Sahib now marks the site. As a token of love for the so-called low castes of Delhi on account of Bhai Jaita's valorous deeds, the Guru shifted to the colony of shoe makers, called Mochi Bagh. The cobblers (*mochis*) served the Guru with great devotion. The Guru was so much impressed by their conduct that he changed the colony's name to Moti Bagh, the "garden of pearls". A gurdwara stands at this place. It lies on the Ring Road.

The armies of Azam and Bahadur Shah clashed on June 10, 1707 CE at Jajau,

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about sixteen kilometres from Agra. The fierce fire of joint armies of Bahadur Shah and the Guru wrought terrible havoc in the ranks of Azam Shah and Bidar Bakhat. Bidar Bakhat was killed in action and immediately after him Azam also fell victim to an arrow.

Bahadur Shah now became the undisputed emperor of India, and honoured the Sikhs who had taken part in the battle. The emperor also invited the Guru to Agra.

After about a month's stay at Delhi, the Guru made preparations to leave for Agra in response to the invitation of the emperor. The Guru made appropriate arrangements for the stay of Mata Sundar Kaur at Delhi under the protection of Sikhs.

The Guru on the third day after his departure from Delhi arrived at Mathura and encamped at Suraj Kund on the bank of Jamuna.[51] He visited all its famous places at Bindraban (spelled as Brindaban in Hindi), and proceeded to Agra.[52] He established his camp twelve kilometres from Agra and six kilometres from Bahadur Shah's camp.

Shortly after *Khan-i-Khana* Munim Khan, the prime minister, invited the Guru to his palace in the middle of a beautiful garden. The Guru, along with his brave Sikh soldiers, reached there and the prime minister accorded him a hearty welcome, receiving him with all the honour due to a sovereign and a man-of-God.

On July 23, 1707 CE, Bahadur Shah invited the Guru to his court. The Guru and his Sikhs moved to the royal presence. He was accompanied by his soldiers, but at the gate of the palace, he instructed them to stay back except one Sikh whom he took along to the place where the emperor met him. The Guru was having an aigrette fixed to his turban and other weapons along with him. His face looked resplendent and his personality charismatic.[53] The emperor thanked the Guru for his help in the battle and in token of his respect for the Guru, presented a robe of honour, a jewelled scarf, a *dhukh-dhukhi*, an aigrette, etc., worth sixty thousand rupees, besides five *lakh* rupees as per the ettiquette of the royal *darbar*. The Guru did not, however, put on the robes, instead asking the Sikh accompanying him to take it to their camp.[54]

The Guru stayed there for about five months. During this period he met the emperor quite often, who sought solace from the Guru. The discussion often revolved around two points : religion and Sikh-Mughal relations.

One day, when the Guru was sitting by the emperor, a fanatical Sayyed in a bid to poison the emperor against the Guru, said to the Guru :

> "Your Holiness, all the *pirs*, prophets and incarnations have worked and demonstrated their powers through miracles. Will your holiness also show us some miracle ?"[55]
>
> "Yes," said the Guru, serenely pulling his sword out of his scabbard, "This is the highest of miracles. It takes the life out of the tyrant, can upturn the thrones and make those who are helpless wanderers one day, emperors the next day."[56]

The Sayyed was thus made speechless with his eyes cast on the ground out of fear and shame. As this news travelled, everyone was amazed at the fearlessness of the Guru even in the presence of the emperor of the land in whose presence it was not just possible for anyone to appear, much less to draw a sword.

On another day, Bahadur Shah said to the Guru :

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"There is no faith better than ours. Why should not those who want to escape hell, embrace it ?"

The Guru replied, "It is not the stamp but what is inside it that gives a coin its worth. Even if a counterfeit coin has your stamp imprinted upon it, no one will exchange it with goods in the market. So also in the case of faith. It is not the label but the content that is pleasing to God, and which determines who is to be consigned to hell and who to heaven. I believe in one God, not two or three, and for me no one is an infidel save one who denies His presence."[57]

Regarding the objective, the Guru had in his mind while negotiating with Bahadur Shah many illogical and flimsy conclusions have been drawn. Accordingly to M.A. Macauliffe the Guru, egged on by the spirit of revenge, wanted Wazir Khan to be sentenced to death as per Muslim law. Dr Hari Ram Gupta also opines that the Guru wanted Wazir Khan of Sarhind, Sucha Nand Diwan of Sarhind, Gangu Brahmin of Kheri, Jani and Mani of Morinda, Shama Khan of Bajwara, Mukkaram Khan of Jalandhar and Dilawar Khan of Lahore to be delivered to him.[58]

Both the scholars have erred, and have not cared to consider the real and higher mission of the Guru, nor have they based their conclusion on any reliable evidence. Harbouring revenge was in sharp contrast to the personality and mission of the Guru, because it is an evil impulse and engenders hatred, and, secondly, it has never solved any problem, much less the problem of improving human material. From the perusal of *Zafarnama*, it is clear that the Guru only wanted an end to injustice. It is fundamental to Sikh religion that punishment is no solution to reform a sinner. The Guru had brought about the change in emperor Aurangzeb through his conduct and his letter. He had all hopes to change the attitude of Bahadur Shah as well. In all likelihood, *inter alia* the issue of resettling at Anandpur Sahib was broached by the Guru. This is indicated by the fact that the Guru issued instructions in the first week of October 1707 CE to his Sikhs in the Punjab to join him fully armed on his arrival in Kahlur. For this, we have a very reliable piece of documentary evidence in the Guru's own letter, dated October 2, 1707 CE addressed from the neighbourhood of Agra to the Sikhs of Dhaul. Translated into English, the letter reads as follows :

From the tenth Guru to the *sangat* of Dhaul.

You are my Khalsa. The Guru shall protect you. With all happiness, we came to the *patshah*. Address of honour and a jewelled *dhukh-dhukhi* worth sixty thousand was presented to us. With the Guru's grace the other things are also progressing (satisfactorily). In a few days, we are also coming. My instructions to the entire Khalsa *sangat* are to remain united. When we arrive in Kahlur, the entire Khalsa should come to our presence fully armed. He who comes, will be blessed... ...

Sammat 1764, *Katik* 1st.[59]

The letter points to some other things, besides giving reference to the Guru's visit to emperor Bahadur Shah, who presented to him a costly robe of honour. The "other things" could only be the friendly negotiations for a change in the century old hostile attitude of the Mughals toward the Sikh Gurus. From the attitude of the emperor

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during the meetings, the Guru seemed to have formed the impression that his negotiations would soon be concluded to his satisfaction, facilitating his early return to Anandpur Sahib. The only persons to be adversely affected, directly or indirectly, by the implementation of a peaceful settlement between the emperor and the Guru, were the hill *rajas* of the Shivaliks and Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind. To meet any emergency that might be created by them on his return to Anandpur Sahib in Kahlur state, the Guru asked the Sikhs to join him fully armed. The irrefutable evidence of the letter also repudiates the conjecture that the Guru had left the Punjab either in despair or to arouse the Rajputs and Marathas against the Mughals.

The Guru left Agra along with emperor Bahadur Shah in November, 1707 CE.

Persistent Pursuit for Moral Justice

But the Guru's expectation of an early return to Anandpur Sahib , where he could pick up the old threads and continue with his mission, did not materialise. No doubt, the emperor's gestures of goodwill towards the Guru were impressive, yet he was wary of agreeing to the demands of the Guru. With the issue of succession to the Mughal throne not finally settled, he could ill afford to annoy the Muslim fundamentalist lobbies at the court by going against the interests of Wazir Khan, who had the solid backing of the Naqshbandis, then led by Khalifa Saifuddin.

The Guru was given the impression that after dealing with the disturbances, the emperor would do the needful.

According to Dr. Hari Ram Gupta :

> The entire Mughal court was anti-Hindu and anti-Sikh. The Guru was looked down upon as a rebel punishable with death. Wazir Khan was a hero for them, fit to be rewarded rather than punished. His representative was always in attendance at the court. He must have reported the matter to his master. The Guru's influence with the emperor was looked down upon by one and all. Every courtier was alert to see that no harm came to Wazir Khan, while intrigues and machinations to harm the Guru were set afoot in right earnest.[60]

In fact, Bahadur Shah could not extricate himself from the syndrome of prevalent orthodoxy, and practise the divinely inspired humanism preached by the Guru.

Nevertheless, the Guru's apostolic approach forbade him to leave Bahadur Shah without giving him a chance to redeem himself. Emperor Bahadur Shah lived at Agra in peace till November 12, 1707 CE, when he had to go to Rajputana (present-day Rajasthan) where disturbances had broken out.[61]

The Guru did not immediately start his march alongwith Bahadur Shah when he left Agra. He stayed back and joined him at Ajmer between March 24 and April 2 of 1708 CE alongwith his trusted Sikhs. He saw for himself how the Rajput princes reacted to the advances of Bahadur Shah, and with what great difficulty, the emperor could secure a superficial calm. He must have also noted how Aurangzeb's rabid fundamentalism had engendered innate hatred for the Mughal rule equally among the Rajput commonality and the Rajput elites.

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Even in the midst of mirk and dross, the Guru's nobility shone forth and its luster enlightened whosoever came to his sublime presence, or to the assemblies of the Sikhs, held twice daily.

On April 2, 1708 CE an incident occurred. According to Abdul Rasul,[62] author of *Tarikh-i-Muazzam Shah*, written in 1708 CE, emperor Bahadur Shah was halting at Chittor. Sri Guru Gobind Singh was with him. There was a lad whom the author called 'son of Guru Gubind Singh'. He was anxious to see the fort of Chittorgarh. He took along with him fifty to sixty comrades and made a dash to enter the fort. The guards at the gate obstructed their entry. A scuffle ensued and the guards were killed. At this, a strong contingent of troops (*fauj-i-digar*) sprang from Kamingah, place of ambush. A bloody fight took place. The 'son of Sri Guru Gobind Singh', like furious tiger, struck down men with his piercing sword and fell dead by the side of his companions. Abdul Rasul's mention of the 'son of the Guru' could not have implied his real son. His real sons, all four, had been already dead. The learned author erred because he mistook a certain lad whom the Guru treated with great fatherly love and affection as the Guru's son. Sainapat calls him Zorawar, son of Mata Sundar Kaur,[63] while Fauja Singh says he was the son of a carpenter of Bassi Pathana near Sirhind.[64] On April 30, 1708 CE, the emperor was at Mandeshwar, and after sojourning at different places, he reached the bank of the Narbada river in the second week of May 1708 CE. A newsletter of imperial court dated May 13, 1710 CE says :

> They cherished genuine enmity towards Wazir Khan who had killed the younger sons (*pisran*) of Guru Gobind Singh.

The newsletter mentions sons (*pisran*) in plural and not one son in singular.[65]

While the imperial camp halted on the bank of river Narbada, a Muslim trooper killed Man Singh,[66] who was renowned for his sagacity, faithfulness, total dedication to the Guru and his cause, one of the three who escaped the battle of Chamkaur to swim and sink with the Guru even in his predicament. The Guru was naturally much upset. The emperor ordered that his murderer should be seized and handed over to the Guru for punishment. The Guru forgave him, and let him go scot-free, understandably to make him and all those of his ilk realise that the Guru's house was always merciful, because mercy, being the quality of God, can reform a sinner. This merciful act of the Guru evoked spontaneous admiration among the Muslims as well as among all the right-thinking people for the Guru. The Guru's popularity enhanced immensely.

The Guru and the emperor crossed the river Narbada on May 17, 1708 CE. During his halts *en route*, the Guru and the emperor had their separate camps. According to Khafi Khan, the historian of the time, the Guru was proceeding towards southern India with Emperor Bahadur Shah at the head of two or three hundred horsemen and also infantry men armed with spears.[67]

Bahadur Shah reached Burhanpur situated on the river Tapti towards the end of June 1708 CE.[68] The Guru's camp also followed him. Where the Guru stayed, that place was known as Khooni Bhandar, the "sanguinary spot", because at one time six cruel lions had been killed there.

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The Guru was very warmly received here by the people. Sikhism had already made its niche in the psyche of a considerable section of the local population.[69] At this place, a number of missionary centres of Suthré Shahis and Udasis had been doing work of proselytisation for quite a long time.[70] Bhai Gurdas in the 30th *pauri* of his eleventh *var*, clearly refers to Bhai Tirath, Har Dass, Dhir *et al.*, engaged in missionary work at Burhanpur. As a result a large number of people had embraced Sikh religion.[71]

The Sikhs of Burhanpur were simply thrilled at the Guru's arrival. They built a beautiful two-storied building for his stay and comfort, and also made extensive arrangements for congregations to be held. The Sikhs residing in the neighbouring areas of the city also did not lag behind, offering their obeisance to the Guru as also benefiting from his sermons and presence. According to Sainapat, the Guru came to this area for preaching, and liberated people of all shades and religious groups who attended congregations.

The Guru's holding of assemblies and imparting religious education has also been vouchsafed in *Twarikh-i-Bahadur Shahi*.[72] All these witnesses prove beyond doubt that the Guru, while journeying along with the emperor, was actively engaged in his missionary work.

The Guru stayed at Burhanpur for twenty days[73] during which period he, apart from meeting his Sikhs and non-Sikh devotees, spared some time to visit Raj Ghat, a place on the banks of river Tapti, made sacred by Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit earlier, as also to have interface with other spiritual luminaries. Mahatama Jiwan Das, an aged holy personage, who had chosen to be an Udasi so that he could devote his exclusive attention to proselytize the Sikh faith, and who had already enjoyed the privilege of being close to Sri Guru Hargobind and Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, and had waited upon Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur in Assam on the bank of river Brahmputra, came to the Guru to seek illumination. The Guru blessed him and illumined his consciousness. Bhai Santokh Singh says:

> God's knowledge dawned on him and he went into ecstasy. He realised the One Supreme Soul sustaining the whole universe.[74]

People called him Atam Das, a slave of the Supreme Soul. The Guru also met Mahant Jait Ram of Dadu Dwara who per chance was there. Jogi Jiwan Das and the *mahant* told the Guru about one Bairagi Madho Das and his great occult powers.[75]

The emperor, who had left Burhanpur after a stay of one or two days, invited the Guru to join him. According to Giani Ishar Singh Nara, Bahadur Shah did not want that the Guru's influence among the people should increase. The Guru, being embodiment of transparent sincerity, uprightness, and truthfulness, did not doubt the emperor and left Burhanpur. On the way, he sojourned at Jainabad, Balapur and Akola. Thereafter, he stayed first at Banera, and then at Amravati. From here the Guru proceeded to Hingoli. At some distance from this place, the Guru joined Bahadur Shah and held his camp at a distance of about 4 kilometres from the emperor's camp. Both Bahadur Shah and the Guru followed the route via Malikpur, crossed Ban Ganga on August 13, 1708 CE[76] and in the beginning of September 1708 CE both camps

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halted at Nanded, a place on the river Godavari and about two hundred and forty kilometres to the northeast of Hyderabad.

Throughout the journey from Agra to Nanded, the Guru utilized his time for the propagation of his mission.[77] Dr Ganda Singh writes that at times the Guru was not seen in either of the two camps for days together even for a whole week and was busy suffusing the people with Sikh religion.[78] On the way, he also acquired firsthand perception of men and matters around. George Forster vouchsafes :

> He (Guru Gobind Singh) even received marks of favour from Bahadur Shah who being apprised of his military abilities gave him a charge in the army which marched into the Deccan to oppose the rebellion of Ram Buchish (Kam Bakhas).[79]

Many of the later historians including Elphinstone[80] dittoed him. Elphinstone asserted that Forster's account was confirmed by Khafi Khan. But this is not correct. Khafi Khan says that "Sri Guru Gobind Singhaccompanied Bahadur Shah with 200-300 horsemen carrying spears and some infantry."[81] His exact word were : "... *piada dar rakab rafaqat namud.*"

There should be no ambiguity about the meaning of the word *rafaqat* — it only means 'companionship' and nothing more. The events in the life of the Guru do not lend any support to the aforesaid statement of George Forster. At Agra we find the Guru ordering the dress of honour presented to him by the emperor to be carried away by a follower instead of carrying it himself according to court etiquette and practice in the royal presence. This was a privilege never allowed to officials or servants of the state. Again, during his southward march, the Guru sometimes separated himself from Bahadur Shah's camp for a number of days to carry on his missionary work. *Twarikh-i-Bahadur Shahi* tells us :

> Guru Gobind, one of the grandsons of Nanak, had come into these districts to travel, and accompanied the royal camp. He was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics and all sorts of people.[82]

This could not have been permitted to a servant of the state, especially when he was proceeding on a military expedition against a threatening rebellion. There is further strong evidence against Forster's wrong conclusion. On the 5th of *Ramzan*, 1120 AH, a month after the death of the Guru, a report was made to emperor Bahadur Shah "as to the disposal of moveable property of the Guru Gobind Nanak. It was of considerable value and, according to rule applicable to imperial officials and servants of the State, liable to be confiscated. The emperor remarked that he did not want to confiscate the goods of a *darvesh* and ordered that these should be relinquished to the heirs."[83] The *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, in Rajasthan State Archives, has one entry dated November 1708 CE, wherein the emperor is reported to have said, "The imperial treasury will not flourish with these goods. It is the property of *darveshain* (saints). It should not be interfered with."[84] Here also the emperor does not consider the Guru as a state employee.

The Guru at Nanded

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The Guru, chose to stay at Nanded, and gave up the idea of accompanying Bahadur Shah any further. He selected for his residence a congenial spot overlooking the river. Soon the place of his abode began to be called Abchal Nagar, the "city of the Eternal". Its original name was Afzal Nagar. The name *Abchal Nagar* was given after the Guru's demise. The question now is why the name *Abchal Nagar* was found suitable. After the death rites, when *Hukam* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib was read, the *shabad* began with the verse "*Abchal nagar Gobind Guru ka*..."[85] From this *Hukam*, the name *Abchal Nagar* was chosen.

The last days of his earthly life were spent here in all the wondrous glow of Sikh way of life as it began at Anandpur Sahib and had been kept undimmed all through. Anandpur Sahib was reproduced in the Deccan.

Why did the Guru give up the idea of proceeding further with the emperor ? Why did the Guru select this place in particular ? Contemporary evidence does not throw much light in regard to these questions. But circumstantial evidence does help us to reach some conclusions. The Guru accompanied Bahadur Shah from Agra to Nanded over a period of about fifteen months, July 1707 CE to October 1708 CE. Understandably, he was continuing old negotiations, hoping that a satisfactory conclusion would soon be reached, but in the process he realised that Bahadur Shah had come under the influence of Muslim orthodoxy, still spearheaded by Naqshbandis and Sayyeds of Burahas, who were associating with Wazir Khan, and were opposed to any settlement between the Khalsa and the Mughal state. The Guru, therefore, thought it pointless to continue his association with Bahadur Shah.

Following his own programme the Guru started addressing congregations without much loss of time, besides offering usual daily prayers.[86] The Guru soon became the focus of the people's attention, who thronged to him to have a glimpse of his divine personality and also to be suffused with his soulful ideology.

The Guru stayed at Nanded for about a month, during which period he was relentless in promoting the cause of Sikhism. Through his life style and his vigorous preaching, he tried to teach people to differentiate between what was dross and what was vital. He organised hunting expeditions in the environs of the river Godavari to demonstrate to the people the need for active and courageous life. Gurdwara Shikar Ghat enshrines the memory of this aspect of the Guru's activities.

He regularly addressed the assemblies both in the morning and afternoon. These assemblies were largely attended. A large number of people flocked to him. The Guru inculcated among them a new spirit through the recitation from *Adi Granth* and through sermons. Bhai Mani Singh who had learnt the art of exposition of Sikh scriptures from Sri Guru Gobind Singh, gave discourses explaining *Gurbani*, and the Sikh way of life.

Of the many disciples who came to the Guru, Sayeed Khan was one of the most important ones. He came all the way from Kangra hills to see the Master. One day in the full assembly of the disciples, a messenger arrived from the Punjab, and gave a letter to Sayeed Khan. He opened the letter and passed it on to the Guru. It was from

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his sister Nasiran, and it was a song, an epic telling how the emperor's minions ransacked Sadhaura, treating Pir Budhu Shah as a rebel. But accepting the Will of the Lord, she wrote :

> Today Shah Sahib is gone to the heavenly land, and it is now my turn. These eyes have not seen the beloved yet, but they are intoxicated with beauty in meditation. There is no sorrow. It is the inner joy blossoming up in fullness of a willing death.[87]

As the letter was read, the Guru closed his eyes and said a prayer for Nasiran. The Guru always inspired the Sikhs with ideals which take one beyond the physical concerns. Bhai Nand Lal, one of the counsellors of Bahadur Shah, also attended upon the Guru. He told the Guru the emperor's point of view, but never went beyond his official duties.

The Guru in his resolve to propagate his mission fully utilised the services of *dhadis*. Nath Mal was one such *dhadi* out of the many in the Guru's court. He sang *vars* to the accompaniment of *dhad* to highlight the achievements of the Sikh Gurus and their Sikhs. Generally, they sang in Punjabi but at Nanded all those who attended the congregations were not Punjabi-knowing people. Quite a large number of them, particularly the Muslims understood and spoke Persian. To make them understand the Guru's mission, Nath Mal sang ballads in Persian also. One such ballad known as *Amarnama*, composed under the name of the Guru himself in the first person has come down to us through the son of Bhai Fatta, the seventh generation descendant of Nath Mal.[88]

A perusal of this ballad gives us an outline of the essence of the Guru's teachings. Nath Mal says that the Guru pitched his camp in a graveyard, which caused great tumult among the Muslims of the locality. The Guru's discreet silence and luminous personality overwhelmed and quietened them. This event underlined the point that the Guru attached no importance to graves, and that he did not regard them as sacrosanct. Nath Mal further mentions *inter alia* that the Guru's men killed goats on the day of solar eclipse, that he gave alms and rewards to people irrespective of caste and profession, that he issued injunctions to the Sikhs not to seek guidance from Brahmins, that he exhorted the Sikhs to have *pahul* irrespective of age, gender or social status.

From all this, it can be safely surmised that the Guru rejected the superstitions attached with the solar eclipse, and abhorred the society recognizing differences on the basis of caste and wealth. He strongly upheld the commitment to build an egalitarian society, whose members were suffused with faith in the Oneness of God and Brotherhood of mankind. Furthermore, he exhorted the Sikhs to have the nectar of the double-edged sword, *amrit*, and to join the Khalsa brotherhood, which according to him, was at once a pattern and an instrument to promote the cause of *Waheguru*.

The Guru deliberated upon different problems of society with persons holding important positions in different religious orders flourishing at that time at Nanded and other places in the south. In the course of these deliberations, the Guru seems to have made a deep impact. Possibly many people around Nanded, who are nowadays better known as *Vanjaras*, embraced Sikh religion under the impact of the effulgent personality

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of the Guru and the ideology he propagated.

Another notable feature of the activities at Nanded was the Guru's concern for the people, who were suffering a fresh wave of oppression and cruelty perpetrated by Wazir Khan and his orthodox henchmen, especially in the context of the indifference shown by Bahadur Shah towards the Guru's demand of prosecuting him. The Guru could not compromise with the oppression. Sikh dispensation demands that evil be fought at any cost, and that the wicked be punished even with force, if all other means fail. The Guru decided to strike at the oppression. He had some infantry and two or three hundred cavalry equipped with lances. He had a great following of very influential and faithful Sikhs in Punjab.

At this juncture, an event took place which proved very significant in the history of the Sikhs. Sometime after his arrival at Nanded, the Guru was informed of the activities of Madho Das Bairagi. The Guru visited his monastery on the bank of the river Godavari on September 3, 1708 CE. It was a solar eclipse day,[89] held sacred by the Hindus who generally perform ablutions, say prayers and dispense charities, etc., during the eclipse. The Bairagi Madho Das, as per his custom, had gone to the river to have a dip and to offer prayers.[90] The Guru seated himself on his couch to wait for him while the Sikhs killed a goat and started roasting meat. This act of the Sikhs was abhorrent to the disciples of Madho Das, who were Vaishnavite vegetarians. They, therefore, became furious and informed Madho Das of all that had happened. He deputed five of his disciples, known as *birs* (braves), to chastise the Sikhs for their acts of sacrilege. But to the Sikhs the solar eclipse was nothing more than a natural phenomenon, and the cooking of meat in no way profane. There was, therefore, an unpleasant exchange of words and blows, and the *Birs* were beaten back by the followers of the Guru. Madho Das' disciples then worked upon the credulous Hindus to go to the emperor to lodge a complaint against the Guru. The emperor's response was of indifference, since the complaint was frivolous. Madho Das then came to know who the Guru was and in an apologetic mood threw himself at his feet.[91]

The following dialogue is recorded in Ahmed Shah Batalia's *Zikr-i-Guruan wa-Ibtida-i-Singhaan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan* :

Madho Das : Who are you ?

Sri Guru Gobind Singh: He whom you know.

Madho Das : What do I know ?

Sri Guru Gobind Singh: Think it over in your mind.

Madho Das, after a pause : So, you are Guru Gobind Singh.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh: Yes.

Madho Das : What have you come here for ?

Sri Guru Gobind Singh: I have come here so that I may convert you into a disciple of rescue.

Madho Das : I accept it.

The Guru perceived what was yet vital in the youthful ascetic and relumed it with a Promethean fire. He initiated him into the Khalsa brotherhood. The former Bairagi

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was now given the new name of Banda Singh. Throughout his life and afterwards, he was popularly known and recorded by historians by the title of Banda Bahadur.[92] In an instant, he was a changed man. He was no longer a Bairagi. He had now become a full-fledged Sikh, a disciple of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, a member of the Khalsa brotherhood. He had now found a true preceptor and saviour in Sri Guru Gobind Singh, who became the focus of all his religious devotion. His monastic establishment was at once dissolved and he followed the Guru to his camp to prepare for a new mission, a new life. Within days, he acquainted himself with the early history of Sikhism, the lofty ideals of the Gurus and their efforts to raise a nation of saint-warriors. He also heard how Sri Guru Arjun Dev and Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur fell prey to the injustice of the ruling classes. The doleful tale of the death of the Guru's younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, who were mercilessly done to death at Sirhind for their refusal to abjure their faith, moved him intensely.

Finding Banda in a frame of mind to act and resist oppression and tyranny, the Guru gave him five arrows from his own quiver as his blessings.[93] A council of *Panj Piaré*, consisting of Bhai Binod Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh, Bhai Baj Singh, Bhai Fateh Singh and Bhai Ram Singh, was appointed to assist him and some twenty other Singhs were told to accompany them to the theatre of their future activities. A *Nishan Sahib* (flag), a *nagara*, and a robe were also bestowed on him as emblems of temporal authority. The secret of his success lay, he was old, in personal purity and chastity and in the propitiation of the Khalsa who were to be regarded as the Guru's very self. Thus, raised to the position of *jathedar* or leader of the Khalsa, and strengthened by the Guru's *hukamnamas* or letters to the Sikhs all over the country to join him in his expedition, Banda Singh Bahadur left for the Punjab to initiate and carry on the campaign against the cruelty and injustice of the Mughal government.

The commissioning of Banda on the part of the Guru to lead the Sikhs against the unjust rule of the Mughals in the Punjab was not in the knowledge of Bahadur Shah. That is why Banda Singh and his party were able to reach Punjab without interruption. The emperor had all the time kept a vigilant eye on the Guru. Despite being in a hurry to go to Hyderabad to suppress the revolt of his brother, Kam Bakhsh, he did not find it advisable to leave the Guru alone. He had the mistaken belief that there would be no trouble in Punjab while the Guru was in the South. He further thought that the Guru's death would be a fatal blow to any scheme of brewing revolution in the Punjab. He, therefore, entered into a conspiracy with the two Pathans, Gul Khan alias Jamshed Khan and his brother Ata Ullah,[94] already hired and deputed by Wazir Khan to assassinate the Guru.[95] Sainapat states that they paid several visits to the Guru and attended his prayer meetings, evidently to avoid suspicion, and to look for a favourable opportunity to attack him. At last, one evening when the Guru was having a nap and his attendant happened to be drowsing, one of the Pathans surreptitiously crept to him and stabbed him on the left side a little below the heart, but before he could deal another blow, the Guru dispatched him with his sword and his fleeing companion was put to death by the Sikhs.[96]

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The emperor, to keep up his stance of a friend, immediately sent expert surgeons to attend on the Guru. One of them, it is said, was an English man called Cole. The injury apparently healed in a few days, and Sri Guru Gobind Singh resumed his task of addressing the congregations. There was rejoicing among the Khalsa at Nanded that God had saved their beloved Guru. In a *swaiyya* composed by the Guru, his gratitude to God for protecting his life is aptly expressed. Not even the innumerable weapons of all the enemies can inflict a fatal wound on those who seek refuge in God. But not long after, the Guru stretched a powerful bow causing the healing wound to open again and bleed profusely.[97]

A couple of days later, Mata Sahib Kaur was sent back to Delhi to join Mata Sundar Kaur. Bhai Mani Singh was detailed to accompany her. On the October 7, 1708 CE the Guru uttered a spirited *Waheguru ji ki Fateh* to bid his last farewell to the Sikhs, whom he loved so much and who loved him above everything. As the Sikhs fervently responded with *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*, he immersed himself in the Supreme Light. Thus passed from the earthly scene a great teacher, a great regenerator of mankind, the anointed messenger who revealed God's ways and Will to the people, and showed by personal example, the ultimate possibilities of the human soul for compassionate as well as heroic action, and for suffering in vindication of the highest truth and values known to man. The Sikhs made preparations for the pyre and the fire was lit amidst the singing of hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The *Sohila* was then recited and *karah prasad* distributed. Bereft of the physical presence of the Guru, the Sikhs felt an agonising emptiness that they had not known in their history beginning with Guru Nanak.[98] But they remembered the words of the Guru who had blended himself into Khalsa. The sense of the indwelling presence of the Guru in Sri Guru Granth and Guru *Panth* or the collective body of the Khalsa, gradually reassured them and filled in the vacuum.

A day before the end came, the Guru asked for the sacred volume of *Adi Granth* to be brought to him. To quote *Bhat Vahi Bhadson Pargana Thanesar*:

> Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Master, son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, grandson of Guru Hargobind, great grandson of Guru Arjun, of the family of Guru Ram Das Surajbansi Gosal, clan Sodhi Khatri, resident of Anandpur Sahib *pargana* Kahlur, now at Nanded in the Godavari country in the Deccan, asked Bhai Daya Singh on Wednesday, Katik Chauth, Sukla Pakh, *Sammat* 1765 BK, October 6, 1708 CE to fetch *Sri Granth Sahib* (*Damdama Sahib wali Bir*). In obedience to his orders, Daya Singh brought the *Granth Sahib*. The Guru placed before it five paisa and a coconut and bowed his head before it. He said to the *sangat*, 'It is my commandment, know *Sri Granth ji* in my place. He who so acknowledges it will obtain his reward. The Guru will rescue him. Know this as the truth.[99]

These utterances were unique and had far-reaching implications. The Guru put an end to the institution of personal guruship by asking the Sikhs to regard *Adi Granth* as their spiritual Guru after him. The Khalsa had already been invested with the status of Guru, now both Khalsa and *Adi Granth* were raised to the status of Guru.

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Other documents authenticating this fact are a letter issued by Mata Sundar Kaur and Devraj Sharma's *Nanakachandrodya Mahakavyam*, an old Sanskrit manuscript, which has recently been published by the Sanskrit University, Varanasi (Benares). Even a cursory glance at the letter of Mata Sundar Kaur makes it clear how the Sikhs after Sri Guru Gobind Singhbelieved that the guruship had passed to the *Sabad* as contained in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. "None in human form after the ten Gurus was to be acknowledged by the Sikhs as Guru. Those who, like some Banda Singh's or Ajit Singh's followers, called their leaders as Gurus, were committing a mortal sin. All other sins", says the letter, "could be forgiven by repeating the Guru's Name, but not the sin of believing in a living Guru after the Ten masters of the Sikh faith."[100]

The personal guruship was thus ended by Sri Guru Gubind Singh himself. Succession now passed to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and to the Khalsa in perpetuity. This was a most significant development in the history of the community. According to Dr Harbans Singh, "the finality of the Holy Book was a fact rich in religious and social implications. Sri Guru Granth Sahib was acknowledged as the medium of the Divine revelation descended through the Gurus. It was for Sikhs the perpetual authority, spiritual as well as historical. They lived their religion in response to it. Through it they were able to observe their faith more fully, more vividly. It was central to all that subsequently happened in Sikh life. From it the community's ideals, institutions and rituals derived their meaning. It constituted the regulative principle for its aspiration and action, the integral focus of its psyche."[101]

Sainapat, writing within three years of the Guru's death gives us a simple account in the climax of the evolution of the *Panth*.

> A day before his death, the Sikhs asked him as to the form he was adopting (or the person whom he was nominating to succeed him). In reply, he said that the Khalsa is his physical self and that to them he has granted his role and that the Eternal and Limitless Word uttered with the Lord's light is the supreme Master Sat Guru Hamara.[102]

Bhai Nand Lal in his *Rehatnama* elaborates this point. He quotes Sri Guru Gobind Singhas saying that the Guru had three forms (*roop*) :

1) *Nirgun*, i.e., the formless spirit of which the human soul was but a small part.
ii) *Gursabad*, i.e., the word of the Guru incorporated in the *Adi Granth*.
iii) *Sargun*, the visible Khalsa, absorbed in *Gurbani*.

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. *Zafarnama*, stanza 44.
2. Ibid., stanza 72.
3. Ibid., stanza 71.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. In Sri Guru Gobind Singh's time and even much later, there was a dense forest in the Ferozpur area. It extended from the bank of river Satluj near Ferozpur to the wastes of Bathinda stretching

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over an area of about 80 km. This was supposed to contain one *lakh* trees and thus was called Lakhi Jungle. Forster says the Lakhi Jungle was a secure retreat owing to scarcity of water, and was famous for the valour of its people and for a breed of excellent horses called the Jungle-Trazees.

7. Gian Singh, Giani : *Panth Parkash*, pp 291-92.
8. Koer Singh : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p. 230.
9. Sainapat : *Sri Gur Sobha*, Sikh History Research Board, ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, 1967, p. 96. Sukhdial Singh : *Sri Guru Gobind Singh— Ik Sarvekhan*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 92, according to a tradition the owner of this place was Khidrana.
10. *Malwa Dés Ratan di Sakhi Pothi*, p. 54. Narottam, Tara Singh : *Sri Guru Tirath Sangreh*, pp. 147-48.
11. Ibid.
12. Bhag Singh Jhabalia, Dilbag Singh, Gharbara Singh (Kandhara Singh), Darbara Singh, Ganda Singh (Ganga Singh), Raj Singh Khairpuriya, Mahan Singh Khaupuria, Sital Singh, Sunder Singh Jhallian, Kirpal Singh, Dayal Singh, Nihal Singh, Subel Singh, Kushal Singh, Chamba Singh, Sumer Singh, Sarja Singh, Garja Singh, Boora Singh, Sultan Singh Patti, Nidhan Singh, Sobha Singh, Joga Singh, Hari Singh, Karam Singh, Dharam Singh, Kala Singh (Kalla Singh), Sant Singh, Kirat Singh (Kehar Singh), Gulab Singh, Jadho Singh, Jango Singh (Sanga Singh) Bhanga Singh, Dhana Singh, Bhola Singh, Malle Singh, Mann Singh, Lachhman Singh, Sadhan Singh, Maiya Singh (Najjar Singh).
13. Batra, Col. Ravi : *Leadership in its Finest Mould : Guru Gobind Singh*, SGPC, 1979, p. 58.
14. Most of the troops at Khidrana were peasants and artisans.
15. Koer Singh : op. cit., p. 227.
16. Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp 1027-28.
17. Koer Singh : op. cit.; Gian Singh, Giani : op. cit., pp. 1026-27.
18. Mai Bhag Kaur, according to Giani Gian Singh, had acted as wet-nurse of Zorawar Singh.
19. Tandon, L.S. : *The Sikh Review*, October 1971, pp. 26-27.
20. Vir Singh, Bhai : *Kalghidhar Chamatkar*, p. 757.
21. Trumpp, Ernest : *Adi Granth*, p. xcii.
22. Baba Pheru Singh : Received *pahul* on the *Vaisakhi* of 1699 CE, preached Sikh religion in Kashmir and other hill areas around.
23. Punjab Singh : Birth 1672 CE at Nand Hazri-Shahar, father's name Hari Shah, a great scholar of Persian and Sanskrit, member of the band of preachers of Pheru Singh, received *pahul* from Sri Guru Gobind Singhat Damdama, nominated successor to Pheru Singh after his death in 1736 CE. Preached in the areas of the Muzafarabad, Poonch, and Sri Nagar.
24. Rocha Singh : Born in 1688 CE in the village Kausa, Hazara district in Pakistan, received *pahul* from Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Preached in Hazara district, Kashmir.
25. Vaisakha Singh : *Malwé da Itihas.*
26. Some scholars aver that the Guru reproduced the whole *Adi Granth* from memory and completed it by adding hymns composed by his father. The miracle of memory is mentioned in *Gurbilas* and *Suraj Parkash*. That the hymns of the ninth Nanak were incorporated here is contradicted by the fact that there is a copy of the holy Granth at Patna bearing the date 1748 BK (1691 CE) containing the hymns of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur in their proper places. There is another such copy found at Dhaka which was written earlier than this in 1675 CE, in the first year of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's pontificate.
27. Kirpal Singh, Giani : *Sri Gur Panth Parkash*, Amritsar, 1973, pp. 1678, 80.
28. Banerjee, I.B. : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Calcutta, 1936, p. 138.

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29. Koer Singh : Everyday would the Guru distribute gold and silver coins; countless soldiers were thus attracted to the place.
30. According to the author of *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, he immediately sent, through Mohammed Beg a *gurzbardar* or mace bearer and Sheikh Yar Muhammad a *mansabdar*, a *furman* to Munim Khan, deputy governor of Lahore, asking him to make peace with the Guru. Also refer to Kirpal Singh : *Perspectives on Sikh Gurus*, pp. 41, 42, 43.
31. Inayatullah Khan Ismi : *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, Rampur, *Insha-i-Farsi*, 11, pp. 429-30; Sainapat : op. cit., xiii, 38-40.
32. Koer Singh : op. cit., pp. 233-34.
33. Sainapat : op. cit., xiv, 2-6; *Sakhi Pothi*, *Sakhi* no. 105 p. 116.
34. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : op. cit., p. 187.
35. Fauja Singh : *Travels of Guru Gobind Singh*, Punjabi University, 1968, p. 18.
36. Macauliffe, M.A. : *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, p. 226.
    Nara, Ishar Singh : op. cit.
37. Fauja Singh : op. cit., p. 18.
    Nara, Ishar Singh : op. cit.
38. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, p. 226; Fauja Singh : op. cit., p. 18.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., pp. 227-228.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 227-28.
43. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 228-29.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., Vol. VI p. 229-31.
57. Sainapat : op. cit., stanza 622.
47. Garja Singh (ed.) : *Shaheed Bilas*, p. 72.
48. Sainapat : op. cit., p. 114.
49. Jodh Singh, Bhai : *Sri Kalghidhar Hulas*, pp. 203-5.
50. *Punjab Past and Present*, XVII-I, April 1983, "*Sri Guru Gobind Singh— The Last Phase*" by Ganda Singh, p. 4, see footnote.
51. Sainapat : op. cit., p. 118.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 112.
54. Sainapat : op. cit., p. 121; Ganda Singh : *Makhiz-i-Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, p. 82.
    Also a newsletter of the court of Bahadur Shah dated July 24, 1707 CE, says : "Gobind-Nanak, according to orders fully armed interviewed the emperor and offered one hundred gold coins. He was granted a robe of honour including a jewelled scarf, a *dhukh-dhukhi*, and an aigrette."
55. Macauliffe, M.A. : op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 230-32.
56. Ibid., p. 232.
57. Macauliffe, M.A. : o.p. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 232-34.
58. Gupta, Hari Ram : *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal Publishers, Delhi, 1984, p. 319.
59. Ganda Singh : *Hukamnamé*, p. 186, *hukamnama* no. 63.
60. Gupta, Hari Ram : op. cit., Vol I, p. 317.
61. According to *Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim* of Murtaza Hussain Bilgrami (pp. 127-28), some of the imperial

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officers had for some time been clamouring for *jagirs* and salaries and Bahadur Shah had very little money in the treasury at the time of his accession. At this juncture *Khan-i-Khana* Munim Khan suggested to the emperor to annex the territories of Kachhwaha Rajputs.

62. *Tarikh-i-Muazzam Shah*, Persian MS, Rampur Library. Extracts reproduced by Ganda Singh in *Makhiz-i-Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, Sikh Itihas Research Board, SGPC, Amritsar, pp. 76-81.
63. Sainapat : op. cit., xvii, p. 123.
64. Fauja Singh : *Atlas of Travels of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 19.
65. Ganda Singh : *Makhiz-i-Twarikh-i-Sikhan*, p. 84.
66. Koer Singh : op. cit., pp. 49-51.
67. Nara, Ishar Singh : *Zafarnama Safarnama*, 1971, pp. 404-6. Khafi Khan : *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*, Asiatic Society, Vol. II, p. 652; Elliot & Dawson : *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, Vol. VII, p. 413.
68. Sainapat : op. cit., xvi, pp. 122-123.
70. Ibid., pp. 404-6.
71. ਲਸ਼ਕਰ ਭਾਈ ਤੀਰਥਾ, ਗੁਲਾਇਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਦਾਸ ਭਾਵਾ ਪੀਰ ਉਜੈਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਨਿਵਾਸ ।
72. ਮੇਲਾ ਵਡਾ ਬੁਰਹਾਨਪੁਰ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਸਿਖ ਸਹਿਜ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ।
    Elliot & Dawson : op. cit., p. 566.
    Also refer to *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*.
73. Gian Singh, Giani : *Panth Parkash*, p. 319.
74. Santokh Singh, Bhai : op. cit. *Ansu* 69.
75. Fauja Singh : op. cit., p. 20.
76. Irvine, William : op. cit., p. 59.
77. Elliot & Dawson : op. cit., p. 566. He was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics and all sorts of people.
78. *Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shah*, "Guru Gobind Singh, one of the descendants of Nanak, had come into the districts and accompanied the royal camp." *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians* by Elliot & Dawson, p. 566.
79. Forster, George : *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, London, 1798, pp. 262-63.
80. Elphinstone : *History of India*, 5th edition, p. 679.
81. Khafi Khan : *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*, Asiatic Society, p.652.
    Also see the translation of *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab* in Elliot & Dawson, op. cit., p. 413.
82. Elliot & Dawson : op. cit., p. 566.
83. Irvine, William : *Later Mughals*, Delhi, reprint 1995, p. 90.
84. *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, 9th *Ramzan*, November, 1708 CE, wherein the emperor is recorded to have ordered : "The imperial treasury will not flourish with these goods. It is the property of *darveshan*, religious people, saints. It should not be interfered with."
85. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Suhi*, p. 783.
    ਅਬਿਚਲ ਨਗਰੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥
    ਮਨ ਇਛੇ ਸੇਈ ਫਲ ਪਾਏ ਕਰਤੈ ਆਪਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥
    ਕਰਤੈ ਆਪਿ ਵਸਾਇਆ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਇਆ ਪੁਤ ਭਾਈ ਸਿਖ ਬਿਗਾਸੇ ॥
    ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਕਾਰਜੁ ਆਇਆ ਰਾਸੇ ॥
    ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਪਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਰਖਾ ਆਪਿ ਪਿਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮਾਇਆ ॥
    ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਏਹੁ ਥਾਨੁ ਸੁਹਾਇਆ ॥੧॥
86. Sainapat : op. cit., p. 128.
87. Puran Singh : *Book of the Ten Masters*, p. 124.
88. Dr Ganda Singh translated this ballad into Punjabi. This has been published by SGPC, Amritsar.

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Piara Singh's book titled *Zafarnama* contains this ballad. This ballad, according to the author, has two sections. He titles one as *Safarnama* and the other as *Amarnama*. It is believed that *Amarnama* was put into black and white around the time of the death of the Guru.

89. Nath Mal : *Amarnama*, ed. Ganda Singh, Sikh Itihas Research Board, SGPC Amritsar.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ahmed Shah Butalia : *Zikr-i-Guruan wa Ibtida-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan*, p. 11.
    Ganesh Das : *Risalah-i-Sahibnuma*, pp. 186, 187.
    Latif : *History of the Punjab*, p. 299.
93. *Amarnama*
94. The view is supported by the *Chatur Jugi*, an old manuscript written by Bhagwan Singh and discovered by Dr Bhai Vir Singh.
95. Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 74.
96. Sainapat : op. cit., xviii, 8-18, 128-29.
97. Ibid., p. 131.
98. Ibid., p. 131, verses 34, 35.
99. *Bhat Vahi Bhadson Pargana Thanesar* :
    Guru Gobind Singhji, Mahal Dasman, béta Tegh Bahadur ji ka, pota Guru Hargobind ji ka, parpota Guru Arjun ji ka, bans Guru Ramdas ji ki, Surajbansi gosal gotré Sodhi Khatri, Basi Anandpur pargana Kahlur, Muqam Nanded Godavari dés Dahan sammat satran sai painsath Katik mas ki chauth shukla pakhé budhwar ké dihun Bhai Daya Singh sé bachan hoya Sri Granth lai ayé. Guruji né panj paisé narial agey bhéta rakh matha téka. Sarbat sangat sé kaha méra hukam hai méri jagah Sri Granth ji ko jananna. Jo Sikh janéga tis ki ghal thaen paegi Guru tis ki bahuri karéga. Sat kar manana.
100. The letter is reproduced in his book, *Heritage of the Sikhs*, by Dr Harbans Singh, pp. 97-98. The original letter is now in possession of Bhai Chet Singh of village Rupa, to whose ancestors it was addresed.
101. Harbans Singh : *Heritage of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1983, pp. 110-11.
102. Sainapat : op. cit., verses 41 to 44, p. 132.

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17

NANAK X
— A TRIBUTE —

Culmination and Beginning

The period of Sri Guru Gobind Singh was at once a period of culmination as well as beginning. It marked the culmination because the concepts, organisational structure and goals of Sikhism became clear and concrete and elaborated to their logical end.

On the conceptual plane, as with all the Gurus, God with him was a living experience, a primal force to create, recreate and to take care of His creations. In the social functions, the Guru regarded Him as 'Smasher of the tyrants', 'All-steel' and 'the Protector and Saviour of the righteous'. This was obviously the logical development of the concept of God. Sri Guru Nanak Dev also mentioned God as the "Destroyer of the unrighteous". This function of God continued to be referred to by Sri Guru Ram Das and Sri Guru Arjun Dev also; but it fell to the tenth Guru to fully express it in actions. This function was not the result of thinking in an ivory tower, it was rooted in the social pattern which the Gurus envisaged. A community of householders could ill-brook God who is indifferent, and who does not protect them against the enemies of peace and destroyers of their life and property.

That God helped and protected His dear ones or the good, and destroyed the evil, was an old recognised strand of Sikh metaphysics. Sri Guru Gobind Singh not only laid special emphasis on this strand, but also evolved the idea further. He envisaged God as a mighty, invisible warrior armed to the teeth and ever ready to use His powers in support of the good.

This institution of the Gurus also touched its culmination point during the period of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru had acquired a place of great importance in Sikh religion from the very beginning. The predominant personality of the Guru supplied a nucleus around which the Sikh *Panth* could rally.

Still another respect in which the Tenth Guru brought to completion the development of an important old institution, was the evolution of the Sikh scripture. Sri Guru Arjun Dev had done a great job by authenticating the diverse compositions

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and preparing a single holy book for the benefit of his people. Subsequently, the compositions of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur were included in it. Sri Guru Gobind Singh put the seal of finality on it, and later invested it with guruship.

Besides, he completed the evolution of the institution of *sangat*. In the beginning it was merely a religious gathering of devotees, functioning more or less in isolation. Gradually its functions increased, and common links were forged through institution of *manjis* and *masands* as the agencies of the central leadership and assertion of the principle of the supremacy of the Guru. Sri Guru Gobind Singh raised them to the status of Khalsa, thereby investing them with the rights and powers of dealing with the Guru directly instead of through an intermediary. According to Dr Fauja Singh :

> With the founding of the Khalsa, the network of semi-integrated *sangats* was fully integrated.[1]

The investing of the Khalsa with supreme powers marked the completion of the historical process long underway.

The institution of guruship also touched its culminating point under the direction of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Earlier also, the Guru had been assigned a place of predominance and significance. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, in so many verses, highlights this point. As a matter of fact, in Sri Guru Nanak Dev's system, the Guru formed the pivot on which everything else revolved. The disciple was asked to walk on the path of God, to remain ever content with His Will, and to obey His commands. But in these matters, as in everything else, the Guru was to point out the right path, he was to interpret the Will of God, and the commands of the Almighty were also to issue forth through the medium of his ordainments. The Guru, therefore, was to be strictly obeyed. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, this fact is emphasised again and again. We come across a large number of verses from the compositions of Sri Guru Amar Das, Sri Guru Ram Das and Sri Guru Arjun Dev, that enjoin upon the Sikhs to obey the Guru in letter and spirit. Sri Guru Ram Das says :

> Sikhs of the Guru and friends, walk in God's way.
> Faithfully obey what the Guru preacheth.
> Hear, servants of God and brethren, serve the Guru very promptly.
> Tie up service to the Guru as thy travelling expenses to God.
> Think not of today or tomorrow.[2]

Sikh tradition is also eloquent on this point. Bhai Gurdas, who lived in the late 16th century says in his exposition of the essence of the Sikh religion :

> The Sikh who receiveth the Guru's instruction, is really a Sikh. To become a disciple one must be like a purchased slave, fit to be yoked to any work which may serve one's Guru. Love none but the Guru; all other love is false.[3]

A natural consequence of such teaching was the unquestioning devotion of the Sikhs to their spiritual head. Sujan Rai of Batala wrote in 1696 CE :

> The reliance which this sect (Sikhs) has on its leader is seldom seen in other sects. If a wayfarer arrives at midnight and takes the name of Baba Nanak, he is treated as a brother.[4]

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The implicit faith in a common superior knit the Sikhs together like soldiers of a regiment. The predominant personality of the Guru supplied a nucleus around which the Sikh *Panth* could gradually flourish. Under the leadership of the Guru, the Sikhs evolved a sense of corporate unity, which found expression through their behaviour and institutions such as *langar* and *sangat*.

During the period of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, as also that of his predecessors, the Guru was looked upon as, i) the voice of God, ii) the Word of God, and iii) the Truth of God. A large number of verses can be quoted in support of the aforesaid three senses in which the Guru was held.

If we go deeper, we find complete identification of these apparently different senses. The following passage amply proves this point :

> The Word is Guru and the mind (which is focused on it continually) is the disciple. By dwelling on the ineffable one, on Him the eternal Guru-Gopal, I remian detached, it is only through the word that I dwell on Him and so through the Guru, the fire of *haumain* is extinguished.[5]

Closely connected with the above definition of the Guru is the question, "Were the Sikh Gurus not Gurus ?" They were Gurus but in the sense that they were the perfect personalities embodying the Truth. And conveying only the Truth; their persons, in themselves, were not Gurus. This fact the Gurus themselves brought home to the people by example and precept.

It is stated in the *Janamsakhis* that when Sri Guru Nanak Dev finally resolved to make Lehna his successor, he put five paise before him, and bowed to him. In *Tikké di Var* or the Coronation Ode we are told that "Sri Guru Nanak Dev in bowing to Guru Angad reversed the order of things." It shows that from the very beginning the impersonal character of guruship was recognised. The personality of the Guru was detached from the spirit of guruship, which was to be regarded as one, indivisible and continuous.

The fact that the name Lehna was changed to Sri Guru Angad Dev, must be regarded as equally significant. Speaking of Sri Guru Angad Dev, the Coronation Ode says:

> He had the same light, the same ways; it was only the body that changed.[6]

The idea is stressed again and again in the Sikh writings. The guruship was something apart from the personality of the Guru, and this would explain how the successive Gurus could be regarded identical. Mohsin Fani says :

> They (the Sikhs) believe that when Nanak expired, his spirit became incarnate in the person of Angad. Angad at his death transmitted his soul into the body of Amar Das, who in the same manner conveyed his spirit into the body of Ram Das; whose soul in turn was transmitted in the person of Arjun Mal. In short they believe that, with a mere change of name, Nanak the first, became Nanak the second and so on, to the fifth in the person of Arjun Mal. They say that whoever does not recognise in Arjun Mal the Baba Nanak, is an unbeliever. In their hymns and compositions, all the Gurus designated themselves as Nanak. Even in private correspondence they signed

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as 'Nanak'.[7]

Even later, the author of *Bahadur Shah Nama* called Sri Guru Gobind Singh as 'Guru Gobind Nanak'.[8]

The next important development was that the unity of Sikhs was being threatened by the emergence of the impostor gurus of schismatic sects and degenerate *masands*. To keep unity among the Sikhs was the most pressing need of the time as well as for all times. This thing lurked in his mind when he took the momentous decision on guruship after him. He, in 1699 CE on the day of *Vaisakhi*, made a pronouncement to the effect that henceforward, the Khalsa was his special form, limb of his limb and breath of his breath. He invested the sect with the dignity of guruship. In the Keshgarh assembly the Guru received initiation from the *Panj Piaré*. When they were astonished at his proposal, he said :

> The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me. As Sri Guru Nanak Dev seated Guru Angad on the throne, so have I also made you Guru.[9]

The investing of guruship in the Khalsa was a step of great significance to the Sikh community. It seems that the abolition of the corporeal guruship had a logical connection with the Guru's war against sectarianism within the Sikh community. The sects owed their origin to the ambition of the disappointed candidates for the guruship. It was not enough to boycott the existing sects, the emergence of new sects needed to be prevented. The abolition of the corporeal guruship was obviously the answer. Furthermore, to impart divinity to the Khalsa, they were explained the role they were destined to play. Incidentally, it also ensured democratic functioning of the Khalsa and their cohesion.

But this development was the culmination of the process that had been set in motion since the inception of Sikhism. The Guru could impart guruship to the Khalsa, because the essence of guruship being Truth or Word was impersonal as well. And to the Khalsa he gave guruship, because the Sikhs had already been exalted to the Guru's level. Sri Guru Gobind Singh was able to transmit guruship to the Sikhs because there was no elective principle involved in the appointment. Each Guru was nominated by his predecessor on merit. He could snap the human link. But the idea of new links of spirit had already been propounded and expounded by the earlier Gurus.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh effected another change in guruship on the eve of his death at Nanded, when he spoke to his disciples that they should regard Sri Guru Granth Sahib as their Guru in conjunction with the *Panth* (Khalsa). This injunction was also the culmination of the development that had been underway. Word (*Sabad*) had already been given the status of Guru by all the Gurus. This point was particularly stressed by Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Sri Guru Gobind Singh, obviously comprehended its correct import and significance, when he made the categorical statement investing the *Granth* with guruship. The development could be effected, because of the impersonal character of guruship and the mystic identification of the Guru with the Word, which had been emphasised from the very beginning in Sikh thought.

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Sri Guru Gobind Singh also carried forward the social and religious revolutions initiated by Sri Guru Nanak Dev. The successors of Sri Guru Nanak Dev had guided these revolutions with remarkable devotion and skill. Yet, more was needed to be done in this context. The creation of the Khalsa of Sri Guru Gobind Singh was not merely an endeavour to integrate the members of his community, but it was also a powerful bid to carry to culmination his predecessors' resolutions in the fields of social and religious life. The code of conduct prescribed for the newly created Khalsa was so devised as to impose a strict discipline on the Sikhs and to ensure firm adherence on their part to the lofty ideals of Sikhism.

Theory of Struggle — Dharamyudh

The clear cut formulation of the *dharamyudh* theory is among the major contributions of the Guru. This theory can also be called the Theory of Progress. This theory in its rudimentary form was already there. The Gurus preceding Sri Guru Gobind Singh followed it not only in their daily life, but also preached it through their sacred compositions. The pithy comments of Sri Guru Nanak Dev on the evils of contemporary political and social systems are obviously indicative of his aim to establish a new socio-political set-up.

The cheap and senseless imitation by the Hindus of their rulers' ways, with no other object than that of placating them, was exposed as an act of servility, and submission to a tyrant was dubbed as an act of shameful cowardice. Compromise with injustice or tyranny was shown as a great evil, and fearlessness or heroism in resistance to tyranny, a great virtue. According to Sri Guru Arjun Dev, in the fight between good and evil, God's support is always on the side of good, for He is verily the smiter of the evil and wicked, and since time immemorial has been the unfailing protector of the good against their enemies.[10] Guru Ram Das says :

> In all *yugas* He has been creating servants, and in all *yugas* has their honour been protected by Him. Harnaksh, the tyrant was smashed by Him, and Prehlad, the victim, saved. The arrogant and the foul tongued were forsaken, while favours were showered upon Namdev.[11]

Sri Guru Arjun Dev depicts man as *mall* or *pehlwanrha* (wrestler) fighting a wrestling bout against evil.[12]

It was exactly to highlight this type of thinking that Sri Guru Arjun Dev, in his parting message to his son, advised him to wear two swords, one symbolising *shakti* and the other *bhagti*. Sri Guru Hargobind, on his part, addressed himself to the task of shaping the mind of the people to rise and fight against injustice and unrighteousness. He collected arms, trained his people in the technique of fighting by organising exercises, and roused them to a sense of fervent heroism by precept as well as by example. He actually fought a few successful military battles in which he and his men displayed marvels of valour. All this led to building up of a glorious and unforgettable tradition of heroism.

This tradition was further enriched by the Ninth Guru by his sacrifice, which not

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only vindicated his faith, but also taught the lesson that oppression must be resisted at all costs. The sacrifice of the Guru blazed a new trail in so far as it was a commitment to an open struggle against the organised oppression of the state.

This was the ideology which Sri Guru Gobind Singh inherited. The Guru reinforced it, so that it became the guiding light of the struggle against evil, which would not only explain its aims, but also boost the morale of the participants. He named this struggle *dharamyudh*. This ideology which was given the final shape by the Guru had the following adjuncts; i) that God was the eternal protector of good against oppressors, and that He was also the mightiest warrior; ii) that it was morally justified to wage wars against evil forces and tyranny; and iii) that the use of force was justified against oppression and oppressors of all kinds.

It is the moral duty of the people to wage war against evil. Sri Guru Gobind Singh professed openly that he had been ordained by God to extirpate the evil and uphold the good. In this context, evidence of Bhai Nand Lal is of great importance. He says:

> He brightened up the force of equity and justice and burnt down the heart of tyranny and inequity. He uprooted the foundation of cruelty and lifted the head of justice.[13]

The theory of *dharamyudh* of the Guru has been expressed very beautifully in the following lines :

> Glory to noble souls who on their earthly way
> Carry upon their lips the Name of the Lord,
> And ever contemplate deep within hearts, the good.
> Knowing that the body is a fleeting vesture,
> They make the Lord's song, they make the Lord's Name
> A boat to carry them over life's rough ocean,
> They wear as a garment that is as a fortress serene detachment;
> Divine knowledge is the light of their minds
> Their cleaner's broom in their wise hands
> In the broom of wisdom
> With it they sweep all cowardice and all falsehood.[14]

The contemporary sources such as *Sri Gursobha* also lend evidence to the theory of *dharamyudh* :

> For this was the Khalsa created, to fight the evil, to smite the wicked, and to get rid of crises.[15]

Dharamyudh as preached by Sri Guru Gobind Singh was not a fight to protect or promote the interests of a particular sect or creed, and hence, is to be distinguished from the Christian crusade of the medieval period and the Muslim *jehad* of the familiar variety, nor was it a religious war in the usual sense of the term. It was waged for the victory of good over evil, for the triumph of righteousness over tyranny and oppression. It was based on a dynamic view of religion, which in its essence was a social catalyst. The Guru viewed religion as something concerned with the problems of society and as something that had a vital role to play in human affairs. It must work for the healthy flow of social or collective life, and must of necessity contend against the ills hampering

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the smooth and unhindered mainstream of its existence. But the revolutionary role that the Guru visualised for religion was not to be stunted in any way by harnessing it to the narrow interests of any particular religious creed or dogma. On the contrary, it was to be conducted with a view to promoting the general good of the society.

Futhermore, the political and social ideals were further concretised and institutionalised. The Guru was forthright and clear in putting forth his views on social, political and cultural matters.

Personality of the Guru

When we picture to overselves the whole gamut of the life and achievements of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, he appears to us a gigantic personality having myriads of layers, each layer being unique and fascinating in its own way. The all-round impression that emerges is that he was perfect in all respects, and in whatever capacity he was called upon to play his part, his was the pursuit for excellence. He was extremely handsome with sharp features and well-proportioned body. His face sparkled like full moon. The general effect of his personality was imposing, magnetic and inspiring. His personal virtues were innumerable; he was cultured, decent, humane, sweet, responsive and tolerant. Straightforwardness, truthfulness and fearlessness were other hallmarks of his personality He never resorted to underhand means, treachery and corruption for the achievement of his objectives. Another important trait of the Guru's splendid personality was his equipoise. Nothing could ruffle him. He had to leave Anandpur Sahib, his hearth and home; he got separated from his companions and family; his two younger sons were done to death at Sirhind while his two elder sons died fighting the Mughal forces at Chamkaur, still he did not lose equanimity in thought and action.

To crown it all, he would not relent in his resolve. He took even the greatest difficulties as part of the game. Besides this, the Guru was uncommonly fearless and courageous. *Zafarnama*, the letter written to Aurganzeb, is a living testimony to the marrow-deep fearlessness of the Guru. He wrote to Aurangzeb :

> I shall strike fire under the hoofs of your horses; I will not let you drink the water of Punjab, what use is it to put out a few sparks, when you raise a mighty flame instead.[16]

Not only this, the Guru in this letter calls the Emperor a crafty fox.[17] He warns him of the nemesis, which lay in store for him.

As a child, he aroused affection of his parents and elders. As father and householder, he showered filial love on his children in torrents. The innocent smiles of his children moved him, and he felt thrilled when his children did something which was laudable. He did not spare anything which was essential for their sound growth. He cared for his household, and made all possible arrangements for providing comforts to his family members. He never neglected the household duties. His family was an ideal one. He managed his family unit not as a dictator, but as a co-partner, or as first among equals. The family of his concept was not patriarchal in the sense commonly understood; it was a unit suffused with the spirit of harmony, equality, and democracy.

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As a general or as a leader he was unequalled. Such men are rare, who can start from a scratch, and yet within a short time, prepare a formidable army, which could challenge the mightiest of the powers of the time. Dr Indu Bhushan Banerjee's expression at this point is worth noting :

> In the *Bachittar Natak* the Guru is rather modest with regard to his own performance, and, as it is to be expected, he attributes his successes to the Will of the Almighty, but from whatever little he says, it is not difficult to see what an accomplished archer he was, and how unperturbed and dauntless he could be even in the midst of raining death. In forming an estimate of the military abilities of Guru Gobind Singh, it must not be forgotten for a moment, that there was a tremendous disparity in number and resources between himself and his enemies, and the amazing thing is not that he lost, but that he could fight so long. The defence that he extemporised at Chamkaur was excellent.[18]

That the Guru, with only forty chosen companions, kept at bay for several hours a whole host of the opposing troops, has hardly a parallel, and the keen and discerning eye with which he chose the spot, where the battle of Khidrana was fought, and the army of Wazir Khan was compelled to retreat, leaves no doubt as to his tactical genius. The wisdom with which he raised forts at Anandpur Sahib, and the quality of military training for which he made arrangement at the place, bespeak high of the standard of generalship the Guru provided. The Guru was a great military planner as well. In every battle, he fought with a definite plan, and that was the reason that he put up a stout defence with only forty Sikhs against a surging mass of enemy's heads. No odds, however heavy, dampened his valour and resolve; no personal danger made him shirk his duty. Wounds only stirred him to greater exertion.

When he was called upon to assume the leadership, the circumstances were far from congenial. The government headed by Aurangzeb was not in a mood to tolerate any movement, much less the Sikh movement, committed to liberalism in politics, social affairs and religious field. It was so much determined in its resolve that it did not feel hesitant even executing those who were liberal or who had sympathy for liberal movement. Sarmud and scores of Muslim Sufis as well as Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur had to suffer execution because of their liberal views in the sphere of religion and social approach. The internal organisation of the Sikhs marked by the *masand* system had degenerated, and the *masands* had become corrupt and extremely selfish, unfit to knit the community into a compact socio-politico-religious organisation. The Hindu masses were completely demoralised. The hill *rajas* were more interested in their feudal interests than in their people. The Sikhs had yet to come out of the shock they had suffered in the wake of the unjust execution of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. Besides this, the age factor also did not favour the Guru. The Indians long accustomed to gray-bearded leadership, had to be convinced that ripeness had no perennial link with age alone. The Guru's own resources, material as well as human, were also scanty.

It is really amazing that the Guru, notwithstanding all these adverse factors, succeeded in creating a following, and led it as an instrument for the progress of not

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only the community, but also of their country and even the whole mankind. In this process, he exhibited remarkable insight into the human nature, psychological reactions and responses to different problems and challenges, and into the social mechanism.

He exploited and harnessed all that was vital among the people. He employed theology, literature, poetry and philosophy to transform the people in his own image, and through training and education, succeeded to inspire those who were considered dregs of humanity to fight for freedom and to do brave deeds. As a matter of fact, the potentialities which lay dormant under the killing weight of the Mughal despotism and the outworn social system, were awakened and forged into a dynamic force to live and die for the sake of truth and righteousness.

Still the Guru did not allow his followers to develop narrow religious patriotism; he exhorted them to enlarge their vision to the ideal of establishing the rule of the virtue all over the world. In this context the Sikh movement was different from the Maratha movement of revival. Aurobindo Ghosh writes,

> The Marathas' revival inspired by Ramdas' conception of the *Maharashtra Dharam*, and cast into shape by Shivaji, in spite of the genius of the *peshvas*, could only establish a military and political confederacy. Their endeavour to found a nation could not succeed, because it was inspired by a religious patriotism that failed to enlarge itself beyond its own limit and a aken to the idea of united India.[19]

The Sikh Khalsa, on the other hand, was an astonishingly original and novel creation, and its face turned not to the past but to the future.

> His (Guru's) aim as a leader was not to lead the people in the context of contemporary cirumstances, but also to make them conscious of their role, even in the times to come.[20]

He enjoined upon his followers that they were the soldiers of God, *Akal Purakh di Fauj*, and that they should continue to strive to see that a society is established, where there is no exploitation and no discrimination on the bases of caste, coat, clime, wealth, birth and sex, where there is freedom of expression, of adopting any profession, where everyone has a right to hold his head high, and where there is mutual love for each other.

The Guru was faced with a very difficult task. He was to give a suitable reply without resorting to atrocities and coercion. The Guru did give a suitable reply, but he did it without leaving the road to moral values. Some scholars have erroneously given the name of crusade to the struggle of the Guru and his followers against the tyrannous contemporary rule; but it is incorrect. For, it was a sublime attempt, perhaps made for the first time in human history, to fight forces of evil without losing the human soul.

His contribution to the domain of spiritual thought is also of immense value. In fact, he was a creative thinker. He did not believe that the world was an unreality, and that the instruments of knowing it, that is, perception and experience, are also unreal. Like Sri Guru Nanak Dev, he believed that since God is a reality, so is His creation, and that access to God is possible only through love expressed as service of and sacrifice for humanity. He says :

> Listen, everybody, I say the truth; Those alone who love will realise the Lord.[21]

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The Guru decried empty ritualism and the prevailing ascetic practices. He says in *Akal Ustat* :

Ascetics who eat dirty food are no better than filth eating swines.
Yogis who pride in besmearing themselves with ashes,
Are no better than donkeys and elephants that bespatter themselves with dust.
Recluses who retire to graveyards,
Are no better than jackals howling in the crematory
Monks who live in remote monasteries,
Are like owls living in deserted houses.
Anchorites waste life in vows of silence;
In what way are they better than the deer who lives and dies in silence in the forest.
... ...
How can one attain divine wisdom
Without faith, love and devotion.[22]

The Guru identified himself completely with the common man. It is remarkable that in spite of his tremendous and unparallelled sacrifices, he did not claim any privileged status for himself. He gave all the credit for his achievements to his Sikhs. He says :

All the battles I have won against tyranny,
I have fought with the devoted backing of these people.
Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts.
Through their help I have escaped harm.
The love and generosity of these Sikhs
have enriched my heart and love;
Through their grace I have attained all learning.
Through their help, in battles,
I have slain many enemies.
I was born to serve them, through them I reached eminence.
What would I have been without their kind and ready help ?
There are millions of insignificant creatures like me.[23]

The Guru recognised no racial or national boundaries. He declared :

Recognise, Ye the entire humanity as one race.[24]

He further elaborated the idea thus :

All men have the same human form
In all men blazes the same Divine Light.[25]

Mission of Sri Guru Gobind Singh

The Guru always considered himself commissioned by God to spread the supremacy of God's *Hukam*, to save the saintly and to extirpate the tyrants.

The Guru throughout his life lived this mission. He never shirked upholding goodness even at the risk of his life. There is not even a single example of dichotomy between his mission and his actions. Even in the field when the enemies were unflinching in their determination to destroy his disciples, he would not waver in upholding the

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principles of goodness and nobility. This thing was clearly visible in his attitude, in his thinking and in his actions. In fact this thing was central to the Guru's actions. Battles he fought, but he did not occupy even an inch of territory, his purpose being only to teach a lesson to the unjust enemy. He used the sword and allowed his followers to use it, but only for the protection of the poor and the helpless. All his wars were of the nature of *dharamyudh*, the fight for *dharam*, righteousness. He never allowed the moral content to disappear from his actions.

Bhai Kahnaiya served water to soldiers including those belonging to the enemy's camp. Some Sikhs objected and reported the matter to the Guru. To the surprise of all, the Guru patted him and said that it was Kahnaiya who had grasped the real spirit of Sikh religion.

Some scholars, mostly belonging to the eighteenth century, state that the Guru's precepts prohibited all friendship with Muhammadans. This is obviously wrong. The Guru was fighting against the Mughal Empire, which was unjust and had lately become tyrannous, and not against the Muslims as such.

Amongst the best friends of the Guru were many Muslims, such as Pir Budhu Shah, who sacrificed two of his four sons for the sake of the Guru. The Guru was able to effect his escape from Machhiwara with the help of Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan, who were Muslims. Sir Charles Gough is absolutely right when he remarks in his *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars* that it was the empire rather than Islam that the Guru was fighting. It must be remembered that the Guru fought more battles against Hindu *rajas* than against the Mughals.

These scholars have jumped to the wrong conclusion, because in the circumstances of the eighteenth century, the fine distinction referred to above was difficult to grasp. The Mughal government had become rotten to the core, and it was futile any longer to expect any justice from the establishment. One trouble led to another, and the Sikhs soon found themselves in the midst of a never-ending clash with the rulers who happened to be Muhammadans. This struggle inevitably coloured the views of the later writers, and baseless motives were attributed to the Guru, which find no support in his life and writings.[26] The Guru spells out his point of view in the following lines :

> The temple and the mosque are the same; the Hindu worship and the Musalman prayer are same; all men are the same; it is through error they appear different... Musalmans and Hindus adopt their customary dress of their different countries. All men have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body, the same built, a compound of earth, air, fire and water. *Allah* and *Abhekh* are the same, the *Puranas* and the *Quran* are the same; they are all alike; it is the one God who created them all.[27]

The Guru understood the exact nature of the challenges and fashioned suitable response to them. The society was in the tight grip of caste prejudices, feudalistic tendencies, economic inequities, injustice, particularism, obscurantism, despotic tendencies, imperialism and inter-religious-group tensions. All these things had sapped the vitality of the people. The Guru fashioned a fitting response to these challenges. He made efforts to inculcate spirit of social and economic equality, sense of justice,

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besides building the will to fight and resist evil in any shape.

He imparted to his Sikhs the conviction that they were always under the protection of God, and that wherever five of them were present, the Guru would also be present in their midst. They were further convinced that on their side was God, who is ever victorious. Thus, the Guru was an embodiment of hope and confidence. The new salutation he gave the Sikhs was *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh* — "The Lord's is the Khalsa; the Lord's the victory." A strong conviction of one's being the chosen instrument of God, and the confidence it inspires, are the strongest guarantees of victory, and the Guru had given these guarantees to his followers.

— *S.S.G.*

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18

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB
— THE ETERNAL GURU —

Introduction

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scripture, is uniquely placed amongst the scriptures of the world religions. It is the only scripture which has come to us in its original form as it was written and compiled by the prophets of the religion themselves. Arnold Toynbee has rightly stated :

> The *Adi Granth* is remarkable for several reasons. Of all known religious scriptures the *Adi Granth* is most venerated.[1]

Moreover, it is not narrow or sectarian in its approach. It has got universal appeal. Its focus has been the entire mankind rather than a particular sect or nation. Sri Guru Arjun Dev, the compiler of *Adi Granth*, defines religion in the broadest possible terms as comprising of good actions and noble deeds. He writes in *Sukhmani*, one of his compositions :

> Of all religions the best is that which is based on remembrance of God and noble actions.[2]

Adi Granth is a treasure of spiritual literature. It has thirty six contributors, including the Sikh Gurus. Its contributors belonged to different strata of society, i.e., the so-called high castes and low castes, Brahmins, cobblers, washer-men, butchers, weavers, etc. They belonged to different parts of the Indian subcontinent. For instance, Kabir and Ravidas belonged to the Gangetic planes, Namdev and Tirlochan to the Deccan plateau, Jaidev to Bengal, Dhanna to the Thar desert and Baba Farid belonged to Punjab. Long before the dawn of modern civilization, based on science and technology, the Sikh scripture taught the lessons of coexistence and understanding the other point of view, which are so essential not only in the religious realm but also in the strife-torn world sphere.

In order to understand the structure of *Adi Granth*, it is very important to know how the hymns of the Gurus and *bhagats* were collected and compiled.

Collection of Hymns

Regarding the collection of hymns in *Adi Granth*, there are two schools of thought.

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The older school of thought is represented by Sarup Das Bhalla in his *Mehma Parkash*, which appeared in 1776 CE. Other writers belonging to this school of thought are Kesar Singh Chhibbar, Bhai Santokh Singh, Giani Gian Singh, etc., who were of the view that Sri Guru Arjun Dev, seeing the interpolations being done in *Gurbani* by the Minas and others, decided to collect the genuine verses of the Gurus and compile them. In order to fulfil his mission, he went about collecting old *pothis* for which purpose he also went to Goindwal and brought from there *pothis*, which were used for compiling the *Adi Granth*. Those devotees who had learned some hymns by heart, were asked to write them down. In this way, verses were collected from different sources. It is recorded that a person was sent to Ceylon to bring *Pran Sangli* which was rumoured to contain some verses of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.[3]

The second school of thought led by Prof Teja Singh and Prof Sahib Singh, very cogently argues that the verses of the Gurus were preserved by the Gurus themselves. Prof Sahib Singh wrote a book on the grammar of *Gurbani* and illustrated how the vowel signs used with the words change their meanings. For instance, if we attach *ounkarh* ( ) with a noun, it implies that it is singular and if it is without *ounkarh*, it is plural. Similarly, if *sihari* ( ) is used in the noun itself, it serves as a preposition like 'in' or 'with'.[4]

Thus, the very nature of verses, Prof Sahib Singh argues, is incapable of oral transmission. Prof Sahib Singh was of the firm view that Sri Guru Nanak Dev himself wrote his verses. Following arguments support this view :

- Bhai Gurdas (1637 CE), who had met the contemporaries of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, describes him in his first *var*, "*Asa hath kitab kachh*"[5], which means that the Guru had staff in his hand and a book under his arm. That book must have been his own verses.
- Colebrook's *Janamsakhi*, popularly known as *Puratan Janamsakhi*, records that at the time of death of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, he handed over his verses to his successor. It has been stated there, *tet mahal Sabad hoa so Pothi juban Guru Angad jog mili*.[6]
- Sri Guru Nanak Dev uses the epithet ਸਾਇਰ (poet) for himself, *Nanak sair ev kahat*.[7] As such he would not be averse to record his verses. It, therefore, makes sense that he wrote his own verses.

In *Asa di Var*, the 22nd *pauri* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and the *sloks* of Sri Guru Angad Dev following it relate to the same subject, viz., how a servant (creature) should serve his Master (Creator).[8] This similarity is not accidental. Definitely, Sri Guru Angad Dev had before him the verses of Sri Guru Nanak Dev when he wrote the two *sloks* in question.

Similarly, if we compare the structure and titles of the verses of Sri Guru Amar Das with that of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, one is convinced that the former had before him the verses of the founder of Sikhism. Sri Guru Nanak Dev wrote in nineteen *raags* and out of these nineteen *raags*, Sri Guru Amar Das wrote verses in seventeen. At places, titles like *Asa Patti*, *Alahanian*, etc., poetic forms like *Chhant* and *Astpadi*

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are identical.[9]

Goindwal Pothis

Earlier it was generally believed by most Sikh scholars that the *Goindwal Pothis* were the primary sources for the preparation of the *Adi Granth*. Bhai Santokh Singh, Giani Gian Singh, Baba Prem Singh Hoti, Bhai Kahn Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, Giani Gurdit Singh, and a number of other scholars held this view. *Mehma Parkash*, compiled by Sarup Das Bhalla in 1776 CE, refers to the compilation of *pothis* by Sahansar Ram, son of Baba Mohan, during the lifetime of Sri Guru Amar Das. It is said that there used to be four *pothis*, out of which only two are now extant. One is at Jalandhar, since the descendants of Sahansar Ram shifted there, and the other is at Pinjore, near Chandigarh. After the demise of Sri Guru Amar Das, these *pothis* were allegedly in the custody of Baba Mohan, the eldest son of Sri Guru Amar Das.

Gurinder Singh Mann in his book, *Goindwal Pothis*, states :

> ... ...Guru Arjun temporarily brought these *pothis* to Amritsar at the turn of the seventeenth century and used them in the preparation of the *Kartarpur Pothi*. It seems natural that after the task was completed, the *pothis* were sent back. There is even a palanquin at Goindwal which, according to popular local tradition, was used to transport the *pothis* to and from Amritsar.[10]

It is said that Sri Guru Arjun Dev himself went to Goindwal to bring these *pothis* from Baba Mohan, his mother's elder brother, for preparation of the Sikh scripture. It is also alleged that Sri Guru Arjun Dev had composed a *shabad*, "*Mohan tere uche mandir* ... ..." in praise of Baba Mohan. Prof Sahib Singh, however, strongly refutes this view.[11] He very cogently illustrates that the word '*Mohan*' in this hymn has been used to address God, and not the son of the Third Nanak.

The latest work on the subject of the compilation of *Adi Granth* is by Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon, titled *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition*. Dr Dhillon has very cogently demonstrated that the *Goindwal Pothis* had been written after the compilation of the *Adi Granth* because hymns of Sri Guru Arjun Dev are found in these *pothis*. Also, on the index the recorded date is *Samwat* 1682 BK, *Sawan Vadi* 1, or July 10, 1625 CE.[12] Balwant Singh Dhillon states :

> The material evidence instead of proving the *Ahiyapur Pothis* to be of earlier origin points to the contrary. It is worth noting that not only one but six hymns have been attributed to *Mahala IV*, i.e., Guru Ram Das.[13]

He concludes :

> Evidently recording of hymns under authorship of Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjun would not have been possible if the compilation of *Ahiyapur Pothi* had been completed during the period of Guru Amar Das.[14]

Similarly, Prof Pritam Singh, in his Punjabi book, *Ahiyapurwali Pothi*, comes to the conclusion that this *pothi* has not contributed in the compilation of the *Adi Granth*.[15]

It seems certain that the *Goindwal Pothis* were written after the compilation of the *Adi Granth*. Here the question arises, if the *Goindwal Pothis* were compiled later, what

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was the purpose of Sri Guru Arjun Dev's alleged visit to Goindwal, which has been so elaborately described by Sikh chroniclers of the later half of the eighteenth century. Balwant Singh Dhillon rejects this whole story of Guru Arjun's visit to Goindwal. He writes:

> Even the much publicised story of Guru Arjun's visit to Baba Mohan at Goindwal to procure them (*Goindwal Pothis*) has been proved to be an apocryphal and a later concoction.[16]

Prof. Sahib Singh too is of the same opinion that the story of Sri Guru Arjun Dev's visit lacks credibility. In his pioneering ten volume Punjabi work, *Guru Granth Darpan*, he shows through the internal evidence of *Gurbani* that the whole story is a mere concoction with the aim to provide historical prominence to certain personages and their descendants.

Bhagat Bani Collection

There are more than fifteen *bhagats*, whose verses have been included in the *Adi Granth*. About the collection of these hymns, there are some scholars of the old school who hold the view that the verses of the *bhagats* were collected during the pontificate of Sri Guru Amar Das probably by Sahansar Ram, son of Baba Mohan. Their surmise, however, is not based on any contemporary or traditional sources. Their arguement is that Sri Guru Amar Das is the first Guru to have mentioned the *bhagats*. A more prevalent view is that Sri Guru Nanak Dev started the collection of the verses of the *bhagats* during his Udasis. In addition, he is the only Guru who visited all the native places of the *bhagats*. According to *Puratan Janamsakhi*, he visited Pak Pattan twice and acquired the verses of Sheikh Farid from his successor Sheikh Ibrahim.[17] Prof Sahib Singh is of the view that some of the verses of Sri Guru Nanak Dev had the echo of the verses of Sheikh Farid. For instance, compare the following hymns of Sheikh Farid in *Adi Granth* with Sri Guru Nanak Dev's hymn in the same measure, *Suhi Raag* :

Baba Sheikh Farid :

> Listen, thou man ! thou didst not look to the tackle of thy boat
> while it was yet time.
> In the swollen lake how shall it float ?
> Beloved ! touch not the world's pleasures, frail like Kasumbhra.
> At a touch withering away.
> This frail life-female is atremble under the master's stern reprimand.
> With youth passing, never again will the breast be brimful of milk,
> Never again union in love.
> Saith Farid : Listen, sisters of my soul !
> As the Lord makes the call,
> Life's swan its reluctant flight shall take,
> This frame turning a dust heap.[18]

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Sri Guru Nanak Dev :

With contemplation and austerity equip thy boat,
Whereby easily mayst thou cross over.
Then shall there not be the ocean nor the storm,
Easy shall thy path be.
Thy Sole Name is the madder wherewith beloved !
My gown a perpetual dye has acquired.
Beloved friend ! our companions towards the beloved are taking departure.
How shall they now find union with Him ?
Should they carry merits in their pack,
The Lord union to them shall grant.
One truly united to the Lord never is alienated.
He, the holy Eternal transmigration annuls.
With suppression of egoism is this gown stitched :
By listening to the Master's Word has such a one received the reward.
The Lord's ambrosial accents.
Saith Nanak : My sister-friends ! dearly loved is the Lord.
He our holy Lord, we the Lord's handmaids.[19]

In both the hymns, the subject is same and similes and metaphors are the same. Length of lines and phraseology are similar, which indicates that Sri Guru Nanak Dev had before him the verses of Sheikh Farid.

Sri Guru Amar Das commented on the *sloks* of Sheikh Farid vide *sloks* no. 103 and 104.[20] This could only be possible if the *sloks* of Sheikh Farid were before Sri Guru Amar Das. Most probably the verses of Farid had been collected by Sri Guru Nanak Dev himself.

Arrangement of Verses

The *Adi Granth* opens with *Jap(ji)* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, which is the morning prayer of the Sikhs. *Jap(ji)* is regarded as quintessence of *Adi Granth*. This is followed by the evening prayer called *Rahiras* and at the end of this introductory section are the hymns named *Sohila* to be recited before going to bed.

From here onwards, the *bani* is listed *raag*-wise, starting with *Sri Raag*. There are thirty one *raags* in all. In every *raag* there is a systematic arrangement of hymns. The compositions of Sri Guru Nanak Dev come first, then those of Sri Guru Angad Dev, Sri Guru Amar Das, Sri Guru Ram Das and Sri Guru Arjun Dev. The inner arrangement within each *raag* is according to structure. The *Dupadé* consisting of two stanzas are followed by *Chaupadé* consisting of four stanzas and *Astpadi* (consisting of eight stanzas). Then come the longer hymns, for example, *Dakhni Onkar*, *Siddh-Gost* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, *Anand Sahib* of Sri Guru Amar Das and the famous *Sukhmani* of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. The longer verses are followed by *vars* consisting of *pauris* and *sloks*. In every *var*, *pauris* are of one Guru and the *sloks* are of different Gurus. There are twenty two *vars* in all. Towards the conclusion of every *raag* are recorded the verses

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of *bhagats*. The compositions of Kabir are given first, followed by Namdev, Ravdas and other *bhagats*.

It is remarkable that every hymn in *Adi Granth* is numbered. The number changes with the type and structure of hymns, for example *Chaupadé* or *Astpadis* have their own numbering. The number also changes with the change of author. For instance Sri Guru Nanak Dev's *Astpadis* in a particular *raag* have separate numbering and Kabir's verses in a particular *raag* have their separate numbers. In long verses, stanzas have been assigned serial numbers.

The epilogue consists exclusively of miscellaneous verses not included in *vars*. These are the *sloks* of Kabir and Sheikh Farid besides some *sloks* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and some verses of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. At the end are the *sloks* of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. The volume ends with the thanksgiving hymn to God, by Sri Guru Arjun Dev :

> For Thy benefaction have I not realized how grateful I should be,
> Thou that has enabled me to accomplish this task.
> Without merit am I, devoid of qualities,
> Thou to me hast shown compassion.
> By Thy compassion has come grace,
> Whereby was met the holy Preceptor, true friend.
> Saith Nanak : As the Name I attain, find I life,
> And my body and mind is in bloom.[21]

The compilation work was completed in 1604 CE, and the *Granth* installed in Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. Baba Budha was appointed the first *granthi* or custodian. Later Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's verses were added in different *raags* as in the present form.

Raags in Adi Granth

Music plays a significant part in man's life and his spiritual elevation. Before music took classical form there used to be folk music sung by various tribes in specific areas. For instance, *Raag Tukhari* belonged to Tukhar, which according to Nandu Lal Day's *Dictionary of Medieval and Ancient India*, was the territory north of Afghanistan. *Sorath Raag* belongs to Suratsar now part of Gujarat state. Birds also play a significant part in imparting music. Therefore, some *raag* names are after the names of birds like, *Sarang*, *Wadhans*, etc. Some *raags* were sung on the change of season they were named after, like *Raag Basant*. Some *raags* were dedicated to particular gods or goddesses. Thus, music mostly developed in the atmosphere of prayer and worship. The Sikh Gurus used *raags* for prayer and meditation on God. The following 31 *raags* have been used in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* :

Sri Raag	*Raag Gaund*
Raag Majh	*Raag Ramkali*
Raag Gauri	*Raag Nat Narain*
Raag Asa	*Raag Mali Gaurha*

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Raag Gujari
Raag Devgandhari
Raag Bihagra
Raag Wadhans
Raag Sorath
Raag Dhanasari
Raag Jaitsari
Raag Todi
Raag Bairari
Raag Tilang
Raag Suhi
Raag Bilawal
Raag Maru
Raag Tukhari
Raag Kedara
Raag Bhairo
Raag Basant
Raag Sarang
Raag Malar
Raag Kanara
Raag Kalyan
Raag Prabhati
Raag Jaijavanti

How these musical measures and their contents were selected and arranged have been succinctly analysed by Prof Teja Singh :

> The contents are arranged according to musical measures, those measures being rejected which are calculated to work the mind to extremes of joy or sadness, e.g., *Hindol* and *Megh*, because they led people to wild transports of joy, and *Deepak* and *Jog*, because they made people too sad. Both these extremes were against the spirit of Sikhism, which works for *sahaj* or steadiness of life. These measures were, therefore, omitted, except when they could be employed to modify other *raags*, as for instance, *Hindol* was combined with *Basant* to vivify serene contentment, and *Deepak* was used to heighten the seriousness of *Gaurhi* and to make it more vigorous. In *Tilang*, *Asa* and other *raags* of the Frontier, a visible combination was effected not only in the execution of music, but also in composition of the pieces set to music. Arabic and Persian words being used as frequently as words from Hindi. *Ramkali*, which was favoured by Jogis, was freely used when addressing monks of that order. *Asa*, *Suhi* and *Tilang* were often used in the hymns meant for Muslims, because they were more current among Sufi *faqirs*.
>
> Each measure is integrally connected with its contents, e.g., *Suhi*, a nuptial measure, contains only those pieces which breathe joy and contentment of a reunion; so is *Bilawal*. *Maru* is a martial measure. Therefore, it contains teachings of a vigorous kind about true heroism, which lies in self-control. Its long sweeping passages refer to the long sweeps of time, occurring before and after our little existence.
>
> Within each *raag* or measure the passages are arranged according to subject or thought, and groups of hymns forming single paragraphs always begin with an invocation to God. Single self-contained compositions, like *Jap(ji)*, *Anand*, *Sadd*, *Onkar*, *Siddh-Gost*, Odes and Calendars, which were composed entirely on single themes, are marked with the figure '1' at the end. There is a similar significance attached to the numerals given throughout the text. Take, for instance, the *swaiyyas* of the bards (*bhats*) given towards the end. When the figure given along with the total changes, it shows that the author too has changed. This is the key to the question of ascertaining the authorship of those compositions, which otherwise in many cases cannot be located at all.[22]

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— *K.S.*

Bhagats of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

Most of the Hindu- and Muslim-born saints, called *bhagats*, whose compositions are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, belonged to the repressed, or the so-called untouchable and backward castes. They came from a wide spectrum of castes, classes and callings.

THE HINDU-BORN

BHAGAT JAIDEV	:	BRAHMIN
Bhagat Ravidas	:	Tanner
Bhagat Namdev	:	Calico printer
Bhagat Sain	:	Barber
Bhagat Dhanna	:	Peasant
Bhagat Ramanand :	:	Brahmin
Bhagat Parmanand	:	Brahmin
Bhagat Surdas	:	Brahmin
Bhagat Tirlochan	:	Vaish
Bhagat Pipa	:	Rajput prince.

THE MUSLIM-BORN

Sheikh Farid	:	Sufi mystic
Bhagat Bhikhan	:	Sufi mystic
Bhagat Kabir	:	weaver
Bhagat Sadhna	:	butcher
Bhai Balwand	:	*mirasi*
Bhai Satta	:	*mirasi*

The *mirasis* were a caste of hereditary minstrels and genealogists and had served the House of the Gurus (16th-17th centuries) as *rabab* players, hence, called *rababis*. Except Sheikh Farid, all of them came from the lower strata of society.

Compositions, called *swaiyyé* of the following eleven contemporary bards, called *bhat* (16th century), are also included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib :

Kal or Kalsahar
Nal
Jalap
Gayand
Kirat
Mathura
Bhikha
Bal
Sal
Harbans

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Bhal

There are differences among scholars as to the names and number of *bhats*, which ranges from 8 to 17. For example, according to Bhai Santokh Singh, Dr Charan Singh, Giani Gian Singh, Bhai Kahn Singh and Dr Sher Singh, it is 17.[23] Principal Teja Singh, Prof Sahib Singh, Dr Taran Singh and Dr Tarlochan Singh have identified only eleven of them.[24] It is not easy to determine their exact number, since most of them used poetic names which merged in the hymns as if they were an integral part and not mere pseudonyms.[25] Eleven has, however, been generally accepted, as their number.

An elegy, entitled *Sadd*, the call or beckoning, written by Baba Sundar (1560-1610 CE), great-grandson of Guru Amar Das is added in *Raag Ramkali*.

Moreover, the *bhagats*, whose hymns have been included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, hailed from all the corners of this sprawling subcontinent :

Sheikh Farid	:	Punjab (north)
Bhagat Sadhna	:	Sindh (west)
Bhagat Jaidev	:	Bengal (east)
Bhagat Ramanand	:	Tamil Nadu (south)

Contributions of Hymns

According to Principal Harbhajan Singh, number of hymns of the Gurus and *bhagats* and *bhats* are as follows :

Gurus		*Number of Hymns*
Sri Guru Nanak Dev Dev	:	974
Sri Guru Angad Dev	:	62
Sri Guru Amar Das	:	907
Sri Guru Ram Das	:	679
Sri Guru Arjun Dev	:	2218
Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur	:	116
Bhagats		
Bhagat Kabir	:	224 hymns and 243 *sloks*
Sheikh Farid	:	4 hymns and 130 *sloks*
Bhagat Namdev	:	61
Bhagat Ravidas	:	40
Bhagat Beni	:	3
Bhagat Sain	:	1
Bhagat Dhanna	:	3
Bhagat Jaidev	:	2
Bhagat Ramanand	:	1
Bhagat Parmanand	:	1
Bhagat Surdas	:	One line
Bhagat Tirlochan	:	4
Bhagat Pipa	:	1

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Bhagat Bhikhan	:	2
Bhagat Sadhna	:	1
Others		
Bhai Sundar	:	6 verses
Bhai Rai Balwand	:	5 verses
Bhai Satta	:	3 verses
Bhats		*Number of Sawaiyyé*
Kalsahar	:	54
Nal	:	16
Jalap	:	5
Gayand	:	13
Kirat	:	8
Mathura	:	14
Bhikha	:	2
Bal	:	5
Sal	:	3
Harbans	:	2
Bhal	:	1
Total number of hymns according to		
Dr Charan Singh & Prof Teja Singh	:	5894[26]
Bhai Kahn Singh	:	5867[27]
Dr Taran Singh	:	5871[28]

This difference in the number of verse-units contained in Sri Guru Granth Sahib is due to different methods adopted by the respective scholars while counting the same. Otherwise, there is no scope for any such difference as the pages of the standard version stands fixed to 1430 pages and nobody is allowed to include or exclude any hymn or unit from the same, for every unit in the text has been numbered. These have then been sub-totalled and then grand totalled in their respective sections or subsections by Bhai Gurdas, its highly learned amanuensis, at the direction of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, during the process of their inclusion in the *Adi Granth*.

In addition to the hymns listed in the table above, Bhagat Kabir has some more *banis* like, *Bavan Akhri*, *Pandrah*, etc. listed in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

It is apparent that the saints or holy men whose hymns have been included in the *Adi Granth* represent a cross section of the caste hierarchy as well as social strata or geographical distribution. It must be stressed, however, that the Gurus recognised no such distinction. They treated all human beings as children of One God. The sole criterion in the selection of hymns was congruence with the universal philosophy preached by Sri Guru Nanak Dev. There were other saints whose hymns did not find a place in the *Adi Granth*; and of those represented in it, only such hymns were incorporated "as conformed to the spirit of reform then in vogue, or were not wholly

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inconsistent with the Guru's teachings."[29]

The Granth is the Guru

The doctrine that the *Sabad*, enshrined in the *Granth*, is of Divine origin and that the *Sabad* is the Guru and the Guru is the *Sabad* (His Word) is explicitly and repeatedly laid down in the *Adi Granth* itself.[30] The sacred volume had been held in profound reverence not only by the Sikhs, but also by the Gurus themselves, and hence, eventually the Word recorded therein "was to take the place of the Guru". The line of personal Gurus could not have continued for ever. The inevitable came to pass when Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the last Guru in corporeal form, "declared Sri Guru Granth Sahib to be his successor. It was only through the Word that the guruship could be made everlasting. This object Sri Guru Gobind Singh intuitively secured when he pronounced Granth Sahib to be the Guru after him. Sri Guru Granth Sahib was henceforth, for all times to come, the Guru for the Sikhs."[31] Moreover, "the Gurus had led the Sikhs from generation to generation to imbibe the qualities that make a great nation; and now that the task was over, the last of them merged his personality in the ranks of his disciples. All Sikh history had been moving towards this divine event. There was to be no personal Guru in future. The whole Sikh community, in its organised form, called the *Panth*, was to guide itself by the teachings of the Gurus as incorporated in the Holy Granth, and also by the collective sense of the community."[32] Furthermore, all the ten Gurus were one and the first Guru's original plan was duly executed.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh installed the Granth as Guru on October 6, 1708 CE, the day before he passed away at Nanded (Maharashtra), as recorded by Bhat Narbad Singh, who was then present there, in his scroll, called *Bhat Vahi*, as under :

> Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Master, son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, grandson of Guru Hargobind, great grandson of Guru Arjun; of the family of Guru Ram Das; Suraj Bansi, Gosal, Sodhi Khatri; resident of Anandpur, pargana Kahlur, now in Nanded, on the Godavari bank in the Deccan; asked Bhai Daya Singh, on Wednesday, *Shukla Chauth* of the month of *Katak*, 1765 BK (October 6, 1708 CE) to fetch Sri Granth Sahib. In obedience to his orders, Daya Singh brought forth Sri Granth Sahib. The Guru placed before it five pice and a coconut, and bowed his head before it. He then said to the *sangat*, 'It is my commandment — Own Sri Granth Ji in my place. He who so acknowledges it, will obtain his reward (blessings). The Guru will rescue him. Know this as truth.'[33]

Ending thus the line of living Gurus and ordering his disciples to "own Sri Granth *ji* in his place", Guru Gobind Singh installed Granth Sahib not only as his eternal successor but as Guru Eternal of the Sikhs. Moreover, he extended the same veneration to Guru Eternal as Sri Guru Nanak Dev had paid to Lehna (Sri Guru Angad Dev) while appointing him as his successor in 1539 CE. "The Holy Books of other religions attained this distinction gradually through tradition and without a formal spiritual

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conferment."[34]

Contemporary and Near-contemporary Evidence

There is a lot of contemporary and near-contemporary evidence, bequeathed to us, that fully corroborates the above testimony of Bhat Narbad Singh. We will like to take this opportunity to put some of these sources, and what they say, on record.

1. RAHITNAMAS

The main evidence lies in the *Rahitnamas* (manuals or Codes of Conduct), written by devoted Sikhs close to the Guru.

i) We may begin with Bhai Nand Lal (c. 1633-1713 CE), a highly esteemed and eminent poet-scholar of the time, who is said to have asked the Guru at Nanded :

> "O, enlightened one ! Who shall be our next Guru ? Whom shall we salute, see, listen and talk to after you ?"
>
> Sri Guru Gobind Singh said : "Listen, Nand Lal, with rapt attention. The Divine Being has three forms — Unattributed, Attributed and the Guru's Word. I now explain the same to you..... Know the Holy Granth as my second self which should, therefore, be identified with me. The Sikh who would wish to see me, should see the Holy Granth. He, who would wish to speak to me, should read the Granth and reflect upon what is enshrined in it. He who would wish to hear what I talk, should listen to its recitation with all his heart. Accept the Granth as my own self. There is no distinction[35] between it and me."[36]

ii) This version is corroborated further by one Pandit Dev Raj Sharma in an old Sanskrit manuscript :

> While the Master lay on his deathbed, Nand Lal came forward and asked the following questions : 'Who shall be our Teacher now ? Whom shall we salute and see and what shall be the object of our discourses ?' The Master replied : 'The Granth, which itself is the doctrine of the Guru, shall be your Teacher. This is what you should see; this is what you should revere; and this is what should be the object of your discourses.'[37]

iii) Bhai Daya Singh (1661-1708 CE), the first among equals among the *Panj Piaré*, a learned and highly respected *gursikh* who remained in attendance upon Sri Guru Gobind Singh through thick and thin and who was with him at the time of his death at Nanded, has also recorded thus the Guru's commandment on the subject in his *Rahitnama* :

> The great *Panth* Khalsa has manifested under the command of the Timeless Being (i.e., God). Believe the Holy Granth and *Panth* as Guru who enables one's whole clan to swim across the Sea of Existence.[38]

iv) Bhai Prehlad Singh, another scholar at the court of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, who rendered fifty *Upanishads* into Panjabi prose and who claims to have recorded the Code of Conduct imparted by the Guru to the Sikhs at Nanded, tells in the *Rahitnama* ascribed to him :

> The Khalsa *Panth* has been manifested by the Word of the Timeless One. All Sikhs are bidden to accept the Granth as their Guru henceforth. As I have installed it as such in the world, pay your obeisance to it alone. All formulas, excepting the chant of

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Waheguru, as enshrined in it, are idle and vain.[39]

2. *SIKH CHRONICLES*

The following Sikh chronicles, written during the same century and mentioned below in a chronological order, are no less explicit in attesting the veracity of that historical event of great significance :

i) The first on the list is *Sri Gursobha* by Kavi Chandan Sain Sainapat, a learned court poet of Sri Guru Gobind Singh who, giving in it a metrical account of the last eight years of the life of the Guru, completed it in 1711 CE, just three years after the Guru's departure from this world. He writes :

> A day preceding the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh, the disciples, in a group, asked him, 'Which form your Lordship will take now ?' The Guru replied their query in this way and spoke thus at that time, 'I shall remain present in the form of the Khalsa. My sole concern is and shall be with the Khalsa; and I have bestowed my physical form to the Khalsa. As far as our spiritual Guru is concerned, that is and shall ever be the *Sabad* which is enshrined in the Holy Granth and is eternal.[40]

ii) The second is *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, completed by Kavi Sohan in 1718 CE, within ten years of the passing away of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. According to him, the Guru then told his disciples :

> Listen you all my commandment, and believe it as ever true. Accept the Granth as equal with the Guru and think no distinction between the two. Guru Granth has assumed the form of the Guru in the Kali-age. Recognise it to be the very self of the ten Guru-kings. He who would wish to have a sight of the Guru, should behold Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He who would wish to converse with the Guru, should read the Granth Sahib with devoted heart.[41]

iii) The third is Bawa Kirpal Das Bhalla's *Mehima Prakash* (*Vartak*), consisting of 164 anecdotes written in prose and completed in 1741 CE (33 years after the Guru's departure for his heavenly abode). This is the earliest available work giving some glimpses of the lives of all the ten Gurus. It records :

> The Sikhs asked, 'Where would we be seeing you, henceforth ?' The compassionate Guru replied, 'Our ten physical forms have come to an end. Own Granth Sahib as Guru, in my place, from now onwards. Whoever wishes to speak to me, should read Sri Granth Sahib; he would thus be conversing with me.'[42]

iv) The fourth is Bhai Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, completed in 1751 CE, i.e., forty three years after the passing away of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He described the event of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's declaring the Holy Word as the Guru after him and passing on the spiritual succession to the Sacred Volume thus :

> This is no more the time for appointing a personal Guru. Hence, I shall not apply the mark of guruship on anyone's forehead. All Sikh *sangat* is now owned as Khalsa under the shelter of the Almighty God. They are now attached to the Holy Word, and he who believes in it, is a preeminent Sikh. He who wishes to see the Guru in person, should acknowledge the Holy Book as Guru. He who wishes to converse with the Guru, should read the Holy Granth and enjoy peaceful life by the Guru's

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grace. He should put his faith in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and should not direct his adoration to anyone else. The Guru will fulfil all his wishes. He must believe this, casting away all doubt and illusion.[43]

v) Next comes the *Bansawali Nama Dasan Patshahian Ka* by Bhai Kesar Singh Chhibbar. It is a poetical account of the lives of the ten Gurus, and was completed in 1769 CE. Mentioning the event regarding the conferment of guruship upon Granth Sahib in detail, he writes :

> When at midnight the Guru prepared to leave this world for his heavenly abode; the Sikhs asked with folded hands, 'Gracious Lord ! who is to succeed you and who is to take care of your community after you ?' The Guru replied, 'The Granth shall be your Guru. I have entrusted you to the immortal God. Always remain under His care…' The Tenth Master has passed on the guruship to the Granth Sahib. Henceforth, Granth Sahib is our Guru…… Accept as eternally true the Word enshrined in the Granth. And believe in none other than Sri Sri Guru Granth Sahib.[44]

vi) Next is Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla's *Mehma Parkash*, a voluminous work, which provides the first available connected account, in verse, of the lives of all the ten Gurus and which was completed in 1776 CE. It also authenticates the fact of the Granth Sahib having been conferred with the guruship and invested with the final authority in the following words :

> Then the Sikhs asked, 'Where are we to see you henceforth ?' The merciful Lord replied, 'The line of our ten human forms has come to an end. Henceforth, accept Granth Sahib as Guru in my place. Whoever seeks to converse with me, he should read the text of Granth Sahib.' They cremated the body of the Guru. And acknowledged Granth Sahib as their Guru, in his place, thereafter.[45]

vii) Another verse-narrative of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's life, *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, was completed in 1797 CE. Its author, Bhai Sukha Singh (1768-1838 CE), was born at Anandpur, and had been delivering sermons at Patna (in Bihar), before writing this account of the Guru's life. Sukha Singh mentions the Guru as saying :

> Read the Holy utterance of the ten Gurus (as enshrined in the Holy Granth), so that it may lead you to the realm of peace… Do not consider me separate from it, I shall always be by your side…… Meditate on God's Name, day and night, so that you may be blessed with peace and joy.[46]

viii) With the composition of the great Sikh epic *Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, popularly called *Suraj Granth*, by Bhai Santokh Singh (1788-1844 CE), completed in 1843 CE, we enter the nineteenth century CE. Almost all chronicles, including this, produced during that century too, mention the installation of the Holy Granth as the Guru Eternal for the Sikhs by the Master, Sri Guru Gobind Singh. According to Bhai Santokh Singh, the Guru, reaffirming the spiritual succession of the Holy Granth as the perpetual Guru for the Sikhs after him, said :

> He, who is my true disciple, believes in the ten Gurus as one in spirit. He should, similarly, behold the Holy Granth, enshrining the holy utterance of the Gurus, as his Eleventh Guru.[47]

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ix) The well-known poet, historian and a prolific writer on Sikhism in three languages, Giani Gian Singh (1822-1921 CE), has corroborated the above affirmation of Sri Guru Gobind Singh in his history of the Sikhs, *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, composed in Braj verse (1879 CE) and the *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* (1891-92 CE) written in Punjabi prose and translated later into Urdu. Describing the historic event so aptly and explicitly in the former, he states :

> On the third day, when the Master graced the congregation, all Sikhs supplicated thus with folded hands : 'As Your Holiness has made preparation to leave this world, on whose support shall the community survive after you ? .....[He] got the Holy Granth manifested, and placed before it five pice and a coconut. After circumambulating it, he made supplication. Then installing it as the Guru, he paid his obeisance and commanded all present to do the same. He then got the *karah parsad* prepared, distributed it, and uttered this commandment for all Sikhs :
>
> 'The refulgent light of Sri Guru Nanak Dev-Guru Gobind Singh, the perfect prophet-preceptors, is embodied in the Holy Granth. As willed and ordained by the Timeless One, I created and established the Order of the Khalsa. All the Sikhs are hereby commanded to accept the Holy Granth as their Guru. Venerate and obey Sri Guru Granth Sahib as the Manifest Body of the Gurus. Those who wish to meet God, should search and find Him in the Word enshrined in it. Those who wish to see the Guru, should behold Sri Sri Guru Granth Sahib. They will get their worldly needs and spiritual longings fulfilled by reading and listening to its hymns. God and Guru Granth are two excellent ships. Those who serve them devotedly are enabled to cross the Sea of existence.' When the True Guru uttered these words, the Sikhs bowed their heads in acceptance thereof.'[48]

The version published later in his voluminous *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, in its Punjabi as well as Urdu editions, is a free translation of the above.[49]

x) The highly learned and respected Mahant Sumer Singh Bhalla, a former *jathedar* of Takht Harmandir Sahib, Patna, completed his *Sri Guru Pad Prem Parkash Granth* in 1881 CE at Nizamabad, Distt. Azamgarh, U.P., but it could be published only recently, in 1988, that is more than a century after its composition. It is a detailed life story of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, given in 396 episodes and written in Braj verse. Mentioning the last prayer said and the homage paid by Sri Guru Gobind Singh to the Holy Granth, the author tells :

> He stood up, holding the sword and bow in his hand, and his head bowed slightly down. He himself said the *Ardas* (supplication). Then bowing low to the ground, alongwith the disciples and their arms before the Holy Granth, He wished all with his newly coined greeting, 'Hail to the Khalsa, who belongs to the Wonderful Lord ! Hail to the Wonderful Lord, to whom belongs the victory !'[50]

Baba Sumer Singh is also stated to have composed *Pothi Gurbilas ki* in 1873 CE which was published in 1882 CE. The bestowal of guruship upon the Holy Granth is mentioned therein as well.[51]

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3. LETTERS

Besides the testimony from the above chronicles, there are some very important letters which proclaim the spiritual sovereignty of the Word, and authenticate the fact of Granth Sahib having been installed as Guru Eternal and invested with the final authority to that effect.

i) A letter addressed to the ancestors of Bhai Chet Singh of the village of Bhai Rupa (Bathinda district) by Mata Sundar Kaur, wife of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, thus instructs the Guru's disciples :

> .....Waheguru's Khalsa must always be alert, and be possessed of discriminatory wisdom. The Khalsa must believe in none other than the Timeless One. There have been only Ten Masters in human form, to believe in the eleventh and twelfth, Banda Chaubanda,[52] Ajita,[53] etc., is a mortal sin. Every other sin can be forgiven by repeating the Guru's Name; but the sin of believing in human form will never be pardoned. 'The faces turned away from the Guru are faces perverted.' Khalsa *ji*! you must believe in none other except the Timeless One. Go only to the ten Gurus in search of the Word. 'Nanak is the slave of him, who by seeking the Lord's Name, obtains His goal.' The Guru resides in *Sabad* (ਸਬਦ), 'God has merged His Own Self in the Guru through whom He has revealed His Word.' 'The Word is the life of all life, for, through it, one experiences God.'[54]

It is clear from this contemporary document that the guruship had passed on to the *Sabad*, i.e., the Word as contained in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

ii) A number of letters written and sent, from time to time, by Baba Ram Singh (1816-1885 CE) during his exile in Rangoon (Burma) to his followers at home, also attest the fact of succession having been passed on by Sri Guru Gobind Singh to Sri Guru Granth Sahib proclaiming it as the Guru Eternal for Sikhs. He has named these epistles *Ardases* and *Rehatnamas*. His adherents, however, call these *Hukamnamas*.

> ..... As far as our Guru is concerned, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is our Guru. ..... You should contemplate the Word of the Guru. The Holy Granth is the visible body of the Guru..... The highly revered Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) had himself installed Sri Guru Granth Sahib as our Guru Eternal after the line of ten Guru-Kings in human form. So there is no other Guru except Sri Guru Granth Sahib.....[55]

He had been laying special emphasis, in these letters, on the reading, complete and uninterrupted recital (*Akhand Path*) in particular, of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He also stressed the learning by heart the hymns, particularly the whole compositions, contained in it. One such letter begins as follows :

> There is but One God. He is the Supreme Truth, He is the Creator and Omnipresent. He is devoid of fear and rancour. He is of Eternal Form and is beyond birth and death. He is self-existent and is obtained by the Guru's grace.
>
> Writes Ram Singh this *Rehatnama* for the sake of the Sikhs. The entire *sangat* of the Khalsa *ji*, including the old and the young as well as the girls, is hereby commanded to learn by heart the Guru's *bani*. If it could be possible, do memorise the five whole *banis* (compositions of the Guru). Otherwise, the *Japu*, *Jaap*, *Rehras*, *Aarti Sohila*, *Shabd Hazare*,

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Asa di Var, *Sukhmani Sahib*, at least should be committed to memory. The *bani* is to be read daily, early in the morning; after taking a bath. Read Sri Sri Guru Granth Sahib from beginning to end, prepare and serve sacred food according to one's means or capability. He, who will abide by this tradition, O Khalsa brethren ! shall not have to undergo any suffering. Hundreds of mishaps shall skip by him. Do accept and follow these words of mine. This in itself is a great and profitable task.....[56]

4. *GURPARNALI*

The *Gurparnali* literature, providing chronological information about the lives of the Gurus and written mostly during the first half of the 19th century, also corroborate the tradition.

Gurparnali or *Gurparnalka* by Sant Gulab Singh, a *Nirmala* scholar, who completed his work in 1851 CE, about the holy succession, says :

After passing on the guruship to the Holy Granth he prayed to it with loving devotion.[57]

5. *URDU SOURCE*

In an account of the Sikh Gurus written in Urdu by Munshi Sant Singh in 1825 CE, that momentous event is similarly described :

Guru (Gobind Singh) Sahib took in his hand five pice and a coconut, the emblems of guruship, bowed his head and offered those before the Holy Granth. And said, 'All of you in the *Panth* acknowledge the Holy Granth as the Guru after me.' Then he recited the following couplet : 'Believe Sri Guru Granth Sahib to be the person visible of the Guru. The Sikhs who desire to meet me, should search and find me in its hymns'.[58]

Other Non-Sikh Sources

Some eminent non-Sikh scholars and historians have also confirmed these facts in their respective works written in Persian and in English during the nineteenth century.

PERSIAN SOURCES

i) Muhammad Ali Khan Ansari, for instance, in his history of India, entitled *Bahr-ul-Mawwaj*, and *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari*, dated 1810 CE, giving a detailed account of the Sikh struggles against the Mughals and the Durranis, mentions the installation of the Granth Sahib as Guru :

After that, Guru Gobind Singh, ended the line of personal Gurus, and installed, instead, the Holy Granth as the Guru Eternal.[59]

ii) Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din alias Bute Shah Allavi Qadri, who completed his comprehensive history of the Punjab, entitled *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, in 1848 CE, describes the succession-event and the Guru's commandment, thus :

The Guru proclaimed : 'The Holy Granth is henceforth The Guru. There is no difference between the human Guru and the Granth Sahib.'[60]

iii) Lala Sohan Lal in his voluminous and comprehensive history of the Punjab and the history of the Sikhs, entitled *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, which he began in 1813 CE and concluded in 1849 CE with the annexation of Punjab to the British dominions in India, has recorded the installation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru Eternal for the Sikhs, as a result of the following proclamation of Sri Guru Gobind Singh :

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> The Guru, from now onwards, is the Holy Granth. There is not an iota of difference between the personal Guru and Sri Guru Granth Sahib. By beholding Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the devotees shall be blessed with the glimpse of the Gurus, enshrined in the Word contained in it.[61]

This monumental work was later published in 1880 CE under the auspices of the Panjab University College, Lahore.

ENGLISH SOURCES

i) Syad Mohammad Latif, in the *History of the Punjab* written in English and published in 1891 CE from Calcutta states :

> 'I entrust,' said the dying (Guru), 'my Khalsa to the bosom of the ever-lasting Divine Being. Whoever wishes to behold the Guru, let him offer *Karah Parsad* worth Re. 1¼ (One and a quarter) or less, and bow before the Granth and open it, and he shall be given an interview with the Guru. The Granth shall support you under all your troubles and adversities in this world, and be a sure guide to you hereafter. The Guru shall dwell with the society of disciples, the Khalsa, and wherever there shall be five Sikhs gathered together, there shall the Guru be also present.'[62]

ii) The twentieth century witnessed the publication of the life-long work, *The Sikh Religion : Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors* by Max Arthur Macauliffe (1841-1913 CE), a highly esteemed and accomplished officer of the Indian Civil Service. He was the first to take up the task of translating Sri Guru Granth Sahib into English and he did publish exhaustive biographies in English of all the Ten Gurus and of the saints and *faqirs* whose hymns are included in the Sacred Volume. His *magnum opus*, *The Sikh Religion : Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, published in 1909 CE by the Oxford University, contains a detailed account of the last sermon of Guru Gobind Singh and installation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru Eternal for the Sikhs :

> .....When the Sikhs came again to take their last farewell of the Guru, they inquired who was to succeed him. He replied, 'I have entrusted you to the immortal God. Ever remain under His protection, and trust to none besides. Wherever there are five Sikhs assembled who abide by the Guru's teachings, know that I am in the midst of them..... I have infused my mental and bodily spirit into the Granth Sahib and the Khalsa.'..... He then put on a muslin waistband, slung his bow on his shoulder and took his musket in his hand. He opened the Granth Sahib and placing five paise and a coconut before it solemnly bowed to it as his successor. Then uttering *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh*, he circumambulated the sacred volume and said, 'O beloved Khalsa, let him who desireth to meet me diligently search its hymns.'[63]

iii) Macauliffe's monumental work was followed by that of Gokul Chand Narang who published his doctoral work, entitled *Transformation of Sikhism*, in 1912 CE from Lahore. He also testifies :

> He (Sri Guru Gobind Singh) did not appoint any successor, not only because his own sons were all dead, but because perhaps he anticipated the abuses of the office if it fell into unworthy hands. He put an end to apostolic succession and, as stated above, enjoined upon his Sikhs to look upon the Granth as their only Guru in the future. He

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> appointed no successor but Sikhs were supposed to look upon as their Guru the Granth..... The Sikhs accordingly hold the book in great reverence and bow before it.[64]

The Guru Eternal

Since the day Sri Guru Gobind Singh vested succession in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and commanded the Sikhs to offer the same honour and reverence to it as they would to a living Guru, the Sikhs have held Sri Guru Granth Sahib in great reverence and bow before it as they did to the corporeal Guru.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib has, thus, been not only the vertex of their intense devotion but also the only object of their veneration. As the succession was passed on to it in perpetuity, the Sikhs accept it and know it as their Guru Eternal.

> This has been their complete and firm conviction, since the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh. In their hard, exilic days soon afterwards when they were outlawed and had to seek the safety of the hills and jungles, the Sikhs' most precious possession which they cherished and defended at the cost of their lives was Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Holy Book was their sole temporal and religious reference, and they acknowledged none other. In the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who established the Sikh sovereignty in the name of the Khalsa, personal devotion and court ceremonies centred upon Sri Guru Granth Sahib. As contemporary records testify, Ranjit Singh began his day by making obeisance to Sri Guru Granth Sahib. On festive occasions, he travelled to Amritsar to bow before Sri Guru Granth Sahib. For the Sikhs in general, Sri Guru Granth Sahib was the only focus of religious attachment. None other existed in either human form or symbolically..... It was for Sikhs the perpetual authority, spiritual as well as historical. They lived their religion in response to it. Through it, they were able to observe their faith more fully, more vividly. It was the source of their verbal tradition and it shaped their intellectual and cultural environment. It moulded the Sikh concept of life. From it the community's ideals, institutions and rituals derived their meaning. Its role in ensuring the community's integration and permanence and in determining the course of its history has been crucial.[65]

Sri Guru Granth Sahib has been and shall ever be the pivot of Sikh spiritual, social, cultural and intellectual life.

Even after three centuries of its installation, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is still the only "continuing spiritual and historical authority for the Sikhs."[66] And shall ever remain as such, because it has become "not only their spiritual and religious guide, but has also shaped their intellectual and cultural environment." So much so that almost all of their ceremonies related to birth, initiation, marriage, and death take place in its presence; and it remains the focus of attention and veneration all through those ceremonial and ritual occasions. Its "physical presence and poetic contents are the two main forces that have shaped the Sikh conduct and the meaning of a Sikh." This in itself is unique in the history of mankind, religious in general and the spiritual in particular.

— *H.S.S.*

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4. For details see the introductory pages of *Shabadarth*, Vol. I, SGPC, Amritsar.
5. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 1:32.
6. *Puratan Janamsakhi*, KHALSA SAMACHAR, Amritsar, 1948, p. 132.
   ਤਿਤ ਮਹਿਲ ਜੋ ਸਬਦ ਹੋਆ ਸੋ ਪੋਥੀ ਜੁਬਾਨਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦ ਜੋਗ ਮਿਲੀ ।
7. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Raag Dhanasri*, p. 660.
   ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਾਇਰੁ ਏਵ ਕਹਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਚੇ ਪਰਵਦਗਾਰਾ ॥
   On p. 434, Sri Guru Nanak Dev again addresses himself as a poet :
   ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਇ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਇਰ ਏਵ ਕਹਿਆ ॥
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13. Ibid., p. 131.
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15. Pritam Singh : *Ahyapurwali Pothi*, Amritsar, 1998, p. 238.
16. Dhillon, Balwant Singh : op. cit., pp. 143-44.
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    ਬੇੜਾ ਬੰਧਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨ ਕੀ ਵੇਲਾ ॥
    ਭਰਿ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਜਬੁ ਊਛਲੈ ਤਬ ਤਰਣੁ ਦੁਹੇਲਾ ॥੧॥
    ਹਥੁ ਨ ਲਾਇ ਕਸੁੰਭੜੈ ਜਲਿ ਜਾਸੀ ਢੋਲਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
    ਇਕ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਪਤਲੀ ਸਹ ਕੇਰੇ ਬੋਲਾ ॥
    ਦੁਧਾ ਥਣੀ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਮੇਲਾ ॥੨॥
    ਕਹੈ ਫਰੀਦੁ ਸਹੇਲੀਹੋ ਸਹੁ ਅਲਾਏਸੀ ॥
    ਹੰਸੁ ਚਲਸੀ ਡੂੰਮਣਾ ਅਹਿ ਤਨੁ ਢੇਰੀ ਥੀਸੀ ॥੩॥੨॥
19. Ibid., *Raag Suhi*, p. 729.
    ਜਪ ਤਪ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਬੇੜੁਲਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਲੰਘਹਿ ਵਹੇਲਾ ॥
    ਨਾ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਨਾ ਊਛਲੈ ਐਸਾ ਪੰਥੁ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ॥੧॥
    ਤੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਮੰਜੀਠੜਾ ਰਤਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਚੋਲਾ ਸਦ ਰੰਗ ਢੋਲਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
    ਸਾਜਨ ਚਲੇ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਕਿਉ ਮੇਲਾ ਹੋਈ ॥
    ਜੇ ਗੁਣ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਰੀਠੜੀਐ ਮੇਲੇਗਾ ਸੋਈ ॥੨॥
    ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਵੀਛੁੜੈ ਜੇ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਈ ॥
    ਆਵਾ ਗਉਣੁ ਨਿਵਾਰਿਆ ਹੈ ਸਾਚਾ ਸੋਈ ॥੩॥
    ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰਿ ਨਿਵਾਰਿਆ ਸੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਚੋਲਾ ॥
    ਗੁਰ ਬਚਨੀ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹ ਕੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬੋਲਾ ॥੪॥
    ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਹੈ ਸਹੇਲੀਹੋ ਸਹੁ ਖਰਾ ਪਿਆਰਾ ॥
    ਹਮ ਸਹ ਕੇਰੀਆ ਦਾਸੀਆ ਸਾਚਾ ਖਸਮੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੫॥੨॥੪॥
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52. That is, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur (1670-1716 CE) formerly a *Bairagi* Jogi, called Madho Das, became a Sikh upon meeting Guru Gobind Singh who blessed him with valour and some emblems of authority which enabled him to seize from the Mughal territory for the Khalsa, paving the way for the ultimate conquest of the Panjab by the Sikhs. Later, he 'widened his role to embrace a spiritual ministry as well.' When captured by the Mughal forces he preferred gruesome death than conversion to Islam and died a martyr, suffering harshest torments at Delhi on June 9, 1716.
53. That is, Ajit Singh, Palit, the adopted son of Mata Sundar Kaur who later disowned him because of his arrogance, haughtiness and pretensions of being *guru*. He was executed in 1725 CE under the orders of Emperor Muhammad Shah for causing the death of a Muslim *faqir* in Delhi.
54. According to Prof. Harbans Singh, this letter "is now in the possession of Bhai Chet Singh of the village Bhai Rupa, in present-day Bathinda district, to whose ancestors it was addressed" — *Sri Guru Granth*, op. cit., pp. 11-14.
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19

UDASIS

Introduction

Udasis in the earliest phase of Sikh history formed an ardent missionary order of the Sikhs. They travelled to far off places for the spread of Sikhism. When the *masand* system began to degenerate, they took up some of the duties of the missionary work. Though ascetic themselves, they did not preach asceticism but a householder's life, as ordained by the Sikh Gurus.[1] Their main argument in favour of their ascetic life was that they were ascetics because of convenience in travelling for missionary work. British writers like Rose[2] and other writers like Sulakhan Singh[3], affirm the view that the Udasis were a Sikh missionary order. They did commendable service to the Sikh cause during the period of turmoil in the 18th century when the Sikhs were persecuted. They looked after Sikh gurdwaras, and did the literary work of transcribing the copies of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. However, later they began to morally degenerate owing to the following factors :

- The Sikh chiefs showed immense respect to the institution of gurdwara. When they rose to political power they gave liberal grants in the form of *jagirs* to various gurdwaras for their maintenance and running of the common kitchen.
- After the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849 CE, during the settlement of land, the Udasi *mahants*, who were in charge of the gurdwaras, began to transfer land in their personal names. The British administrators could not check it, because they were not aware of the Sikh traditions. Moreover, the British law of Endowment helped these *mahants* to handle land in any way they liked.
- There came a lot of awakening among the Sikh masses due to the Singh Sabha Movement and introduction of western education. This paved the way for Gurdwara Reform Movement. They could not tolerate *mahants* transferring gurdwara land to their personal names and indulging in so many vices. On the other hand, Udasi *mahants* began to argue that they were different from Sikhs and that they were the owners of the land.

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On account of these facts a section of Udasis, lured by the wealth of the gurdwaras, separated themselves from the Sikhs. They even began to argue in the course of litigation that the Udasis origin was from the sons of Brahma, and they removed Sri Guru Granth Sahib from their establishments to prove that the land they were handling did not belong to the gurdwara. In this way they got separated from the Sikhs. The present chapter discusses the origin, expansion and degeneration of the Udasi order.

Udasi is an ascetic order, which was set afloat by Sri Chand, the elder son of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. The word '*Udasi*' has an equivalent in Pali and Sanskrit which means one who is indifferent to worldly attachments, an ascetic or a mendicant. Taking cue from this some Hindu scholars ventured to trace the origin of the sect back to the *Puranic* age, connecting it with the Hindu ascetic traditions; but historically speaking, Sri Chand (1494-1629 CE), the elder son of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, was the founder of this order. The authenticity of the fact has been amply vouchsafed not only by *Matra*, the sacred compositions attributed to Balu Hansa, wherein he records that Sri Chand received enlightenment from Sri Guru Nanak Dev and founded the order after the passing away of the latter, but also by the fact that in the whole range of the history of religious development in India, there is no mention of any other sect or cult or order bearing the name of Udasi.

Sri Chand was a saintly person. He was a celibate with an ascetic temperament. When Sri Guru Nanak Dev chose Bhai Lehna (Sri Guru Angad Dev) as his successor, it came as a surprise and shock for Sri Chand. He could not believe that an outsider who had become a disciple of his father only fifteen years earlier could know more than a religious minded person like himself, who was a born celibate, and whose self-control, ascetic habits and *yogic* powers were well known.

Much upset, Sri Chand stopped taking interest even in the management of the Kartarpur establishment, the responsibility for which was exclusively taken over by his brother Lakhmi Das. He started staying at the *samadhi* which he built where Sri Guru Nanak Dev was cremated. He dissociated himself from mundane affairs completely and led a life of a determined ascetic. He started wearing nothing but a loin cloth. His friends and followers used to light a bonfire during the extreme cold of winter using cow-dung cakes in front of him to keep his body warm.

Subsequently, this *dhuni* (literally, the small bonfire or heap of burning cow-dung cakes) became the logos of the Udasi order. After about ten years in 1605 BK (1548 CE) he quietly left for Bath, a place near Pathankot and continued to live there up to his last.

All these days, whether he was at Kartarpur or at Bath, he preached the religion of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, as he perceived and understood it. He had full faith in Sri Guru Nanak Dev and his successors as legitimate and rightful Gurus. He regarded their hymns as the voice of God, transmitted through them to the people to enable them to exalt themselves both at individual and societal levels. He highly appreciated institutions of *sangat* and *Guru ka langar*. He missed no opportunity to recite and sing

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the Word. Despite all this, he preferred complete renunciation to the householder's life. According to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, however, God dwells everywhere and can be realised without renouncing one's home or family. He says :

> On top is the sky, and above the sky abides the Cherisher of the World.
> There lives the unfathomable Great Lord, the Enlightener.
> By the Master's teaching home and the world outside have become alike.
> Nanak has become such an Udasi.[4]

Sri Guru Nanak Dev never stuck to any one dress (*bhékh*), nor did he hold any particular dress sacred. He wore such dresses as were considered respectable by the local people in general which facilitated his preaching work. When the Guru decided to settle at Kartarpur, he gave up his Udasi dress and adopted the common dress which everyone else wore. Sri Chand could not catch the real point. He considered the Udasi dress and asceticism as an integral part of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's mission. In this background his missionary order began to be known as 'Udasi' order. Sri Chand's personal piety, his prestigious lineage, close resemblance of his teachings with Sikhism, the innate tendency of people to treat asceticism with respect, engendered and buttressed from time immemorial in the belief that this was a shortcut to self-enlightenment, all these combined together sustained and enhanced his popularity and prestige among the Sikhs as well as among people in general who frequently paid visits to him and sought his blessings. Apprehensions arose that people might not form a wrong impression about the configuration of Sikhism. This fact is borne out in the compositions of Sri Guru Angad Dev as well as in the sayings and social actions of Sri Guru Amar Das and Sri Guru Ram Das. Sri Guru Angad Dev says: "What kind of love is this that to another can shift ?"[5]

This seems to hint at the deviation of certain Sikhs from the true principles of the Gurus. Sri Guru Amar Das, too, felt obligated to point out the difference between Udasi teachings and genuine Sikh teachings for the benefit of the common Sikh. According to Macauliffe, circular letters were sent to the people enjoining them that asceticism was foreign to the creed of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. In this connection, the author of *Mehma Parkash* relates that once a man named Gangu enquired from the Guru as to what was the correct path to self-realisation. The Guru told him that he should start business at Delhi, earn his livelihood through honest means and share a part of it with the needy. Bhai Randhir Singh refers to an old recension of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, which contains a text entitled *Sakhi Guru Amar Das ki Mahla 3*.[6] Herein Sri Guru Amar Das declared that a householder's life was better than that of a renunciant, and the Sikhs were warned in unambiguous terms against renunciation. Except cautioning their followers and seekers that the mission of Sri Guru Nanak Dev did not recognise asceticism as the right path to Bliss, the Gurus always held Sri Chand and his followers in deep veneration. Never any bitter word was spoken either by the Gurus for Sri Chand or by Sri Chand for the Gurus. It is on record that Guru Hargobind met Sri Chand at Bath[7] out of respect for him.

In 1629 CE, Sri Chand asked Sri Guru Hargobind to depute one of his sons to

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join him in his religious preaching. The Guru agreed and Baba Gurditta (1613-38 CE), his eldest son, was assigned this task. Baba Gurditta at that time was sixteen years old and had been married to Bibi Ananti alias Natti, daughter of Bhai Rama of Batala, on April 17, 1629 CE. Before his death, Sri Chand bestowed his mantle on him, signifying that the Udasi order was not a break-away group, but an accredited missionary wing of Sikhism.

Four Head Preachers

Baba Gurditta appointed four head preachers, Almast, Balu Hasna, Goind (or Gonda) and Phul. He gave them smouldering embers from Baba Sri Chand's *dhuni* (hearth) to be taken to prospective preaching centres. These prominent preachers set up from those embers new *dhunis*, at their preaching centres, and in this way there came into existence four *dhunis* or hearths (preaching centres). Each *dhuni* came to be known after the name of its principal preacher. The Udasis proved zealous preachers, and carried the message of Sri Guru Nanak Dev far and wide in India and abroad. They discovered places which had been visited by the Gurus but had fallen into obscurity with the passage of time, and established on such spots *deras* and *sangats*, and preached *Gurbani*.

ALMAST HASNA

Almast Hasna and Balu Hasna were brothers. Both of them were born in a Gaur Brahmin family of Sri Nagar in Kashmir. Their parents were Bhai Hardatt and Mai Prabha. Almast's original name was Alu; he came to be called Almast (literally, intoxicated, in state of ecstasy), because of his mystical proclivities. He was also called Kambalia or Gedaria because he would normally be dressed in a ragged blanket (*kambal*), or a light quilt or padded sheet. At the age of 21, he came to Dera Baba Nanak and fell under the spell of Sri Chand, and decided to serve at the *dera*. For his livelihood he tended a flock of goats. Baba Gurditta deputed him to preach the message of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in the eastern provinces of India. He first went to Puri in Orissa where he raised a shrine to commemorate Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to the place. The shrine, better known as Gurdwara Mangu Math, is still in existence. In 1633 CE, he visited Nanakmatta, formerly known as Gorakhmatta, where Sri Guru Nanak Dev had a discourse with the *Nath Yogis* under a pipal tree, and where a shrine dedicated to the Guru had later been established. The place had been reoccupied by the *yogis* who had demolished the Sikh temple. Almast solicited the help of Sri Guru Hargobind who reached Nanakmatta in 1634 CE, chastised the *Nath* intruders, and restored the Sikh shrine. Bhai Almast spent the rest of his life at Nanakmatta, wherefrom he sent eight of his disciples to preach in various places of eastern India. These disciples established Sikh shrines at places visited by Sri Guru Nanak Dev during his first Udasi. As a result, branches were established *inter alia* at Dhaka, Patna and Puri, while Almast had his headquarters at Nanakmatta.

BALU HASNA

Like Almast, he was also a man of pious disposition. He was born in 1564 CE and embraced Sikhism when he, along with his brother, came to Amritsar in 1604 CE, and

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received instructions from Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Thereafter, he dedicated himself to the Guru's cause. He was a constant companion to Sri Guru Hargobind. Ever in high spirits, he always bore a smile on his face. The Guru gave him the appellation of Hasna (lit. the laughing one). Baba Gurditta deputed him to preach Sikh tenets in the Pothohar region (northwestern Punjab). He passed away at Peshawar on December 2, 1660 CE. His disciples carried on his work in western and southern Punjab, North Western Frontier Province and Sindh.

Bhai Lal Das Daryai and Bhai Jado Rai are said to have accompanied Sri Guru Gobind Singh to the South. Bhai Lal Das took *pahul*, and was renamed Prehlad Singh, who is said to have compiled one of the *Rahitnamas* or Sikh Codes. Another follower of Balu Hasna, Udho Das, served Mata Punjab Kaur, widow of Baba Ram Rai at Dehradun.

BHAI GOIND

Like Almast and Balu Hasna, he also belonged to Srinagar. He was born in 1569 CE in a *Khatri* family and his parents were Bhai Jai Dev and Mai Subhadra. He became a Sikh under the impact of the charismatic personality of Sri Guru Arjun Dev in 1596 CE, when he visited Kartarpur (Punjab) in quest of enlightenment. On September 11, 1637 CE, he was ordained as head of a *dhuan* by Baba Gurditta. He preached mostly in Doaba region of the Punjab. He died in September, 1649 CE, at Phillaur where a *samadh* or mausoleum was constructed in his honour. His *dhuan* or *dhuni*, however, languished after his death in 1649 CE.

PHUL

The younger brother of Bhai Goind, born in 1574 CE, and like his brother, he also embraced the Sikh faith at Amritsar on March 20, 1604 CE. He donned the ochre robe at Kiratpur on January 21, 1637 CE, and was ordained by Baba Gurditta as head of a *dhuan*. He preached in the Punjab for some time, and then made an extensive tour to holy places throughout India. Finally, he settled down at Bahadurpur, now part of Hoshiarpur town, where he established an Udasi centre. He died there on May 17, 1663 CE. The followers of this *dhuan* later preached Sikhism in central India where they established an Udasi centre at Chikhli in Maharashtra.

Bakhshishan

Besides the four *dhuén*, there came into existence another set of Udasi seats called *bakhshishan*. These flourished during the time of Sri Guru Har Rai, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and Sri Guru Gobind Singh. A *bakhshish* (literally, bounty) was a missionary assignment conferred upon an individual by the Guru. There were six prominent *bakhshishan*, viz., Bhagat Bhagwanié, Suthré Shahié, Sangat Sahibié, Mihan Sahibie or Mihan Shahié or Mihan Dasié, Bhat Malié and Jit Malié.

BHAGAT BHAGWANIE

Bhagat Bhagwanié were the followers of Bhagat Bhagwan, who was a resident of Gaja. He was a *sanyasi* to begin with. Once in the company of *sanyasi* comrades he came to Punjab. He learnt about the splendour of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and his

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successors. His quest for enlightenment urged him to have the sacred glimpse of Sri Guru Hari Rai. He listened to him and was totally changed. He fell at the feet of the Guru. The Master blessed him, and he took to preaching the Master's word. In this process he had been greatly helped by Mehar Chand, the grandson of Baba Lakhmi Das, whom he met at Kartarpur. He joined the Udasi order. Mehar Chand renamed him Bhagat Bhagwan. According to Randhir Singh :

> Not only he but also all his co-fellows whose number was three hundred and sixty, turned Udasi Sikhs.[8]

All of them, including their disciples, preached vigorously the gospel of the Guru in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Sindh, and at various places in the Punjab.[9]

SUTHRÉ SHAHIÉ

Suthré Shahié were the followers of Suthré Shah who was born at Brahampura near Bara Mula (Kashmir) in a Nandi Khatri family. At birth he had a black mark on his forehead and prematurely grown teeth. On this account his parents threw him outside their home considering him unlucky for the family. Just at that moment, Sri Sri Guru Hargobind who was touring Jammu-Kashmir, happened to pass that way. When he heard the cries of the child, he halted and got down from his horse. He enquired why the child was crying. On being told that he was a castaway of his family that considered him ill-fated, the Guru's heart melted, and he took him under his care. He named the child, then called 'Kuthra', i.e., dirty or ugly, 'Suthra', which means pure or spotless. Among the Sikhs he came to be known as Suthra Shah, the suffix '*Shah*' in Punjabi being the equivalent of English word 'Esquire'. Suthra Shah was reputed for his devotion to Guru Hargobind and for his humour and wit. Many anecdotes are still in currency highlighting this aspect of Suthra's personality. He was appointed by Sri Guru Har Rai to preach Sikhism in the hill-states of Punjab and Kashmir. He also preached the message of Sri Guru Nanak Dev in and around Delhi. His disciples lit the torch of Sikhism in Sindh, the western Punjab and Afghanistan. Suthré Shahié also visited Jaunpur and established a *dharamsal* at the spot where Sri Guru Nanak Dev stayed during his first *udasi*.[10]

SANGAT SHAHIÉ

They are the followers of Sangat Sahib, who was born in the family of Uppal Khatris at village Amba Mari in *pargana* Mién ki Maur in Lahore district (now in Pakistan), in 1640 CE (1697 BK). When he came of age, he started earning his livelihood by supplying *ghee* to far off places. He met Sri Guru Har Rai when the latter happened to pass by his village on a preaching tour in Malwa region of the Punjab. Overwhelmed by the Guru's charismatic personality, he decided to be a Sikh. The Guru blessed him and asked him to serve the people in a spirit of selflessness. Accordingly, he started serving in *Guru ka langar* alongside pursuing his profession of selling odd grocery articles by hawking.

One day *Guru ka langar* ran short of cooking-oil (*ghee*). Sangat immediately supplied the same but refused to take payment even at the insistence of Bhai Bhagtu, who supervised farming at the Guru's fields at Kiratpur. This fact was brought to the

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notice of the Guru by Bhai Bhagtu. The Guru was moved by Sangat's devotion. Bhai Bhagtu also eulogised his spirit of altruism and devotion to the cause of *Guru ka langar*.

On another occasion, the labourers, who worked in Guru's fields at Kiratpur, complained that their diet did not contain *ghee*. Bhai Sangat at once supplied the requisite quantity of *ghee*. He was asked by none but he did so of his own believing that *Guru ka langar*, being the kitchen of God, should not face any shortage. Bhai Bhagtu made efforts to make payment but he declined saying that he had simply done his duty. The news reached the Guru. The Guru called him to his presence. Sangat fell at his feet and expressed his desire to be initiated into Sikhism. After initiation, he was given a new name Bhai Pheru, the way-farer, always delivering comforts to the comfortless and the desolate. He was blessed with the honorific 'Lord of *Guru ka langar*'. Since then, he determined to establish and run *Guru ka langar*, wherever he happened to be. According to Randhir Singh, he was made in charge of preaching in the Nakka and Lamma regions.

In token of having invested him with the sacred duty of preaching, the Guru gave him a *pothi* (book) containing the Guru's hymns, a *mala* (rosary), a *majithi* robe and the authority to initiate people into Sikh faith. He established his *dera* near Mian ké Maur (now in the district of Lahore, Pakistan).[11] Here he ran *langar* for all twenty four hours. His preaching was very effective and covered a vast spectrum of people. He was widely known and respected for his saintliness, honesty, selfless service and deep understanding of Sikhism. When Sri Guru Gobind Singh conducted investigation to purge the corrupt and unscrupulous *masands*, he found Sangat perfectly honest, pious and totally committed to the Guru's cause. He honoured him by suffixing 'Sahib' (Master or Lord) with his name and by calling him '*Sachi-Darhi*' (unsullied beard). He expired at quite an advanced age and was cremated near village Chunian on the outskirts of Lahore.[12]

MIHAN SAHIBIÉ OR MIHAN SHAHIÉ OR MIHAN DASIÉ

Bhai Mihan was the founder of this *bakhshish*. His real name was Ram Dev. His father was Nand Lal Sohna, a devotee of Khwaja and Jani, both Muslim devotees of Sri Guru Hargobind. Like his two mentors he had fascination for Sri Guru Hargobind, his striking personality and his ideology.[13] Once when he went to the Guru, the latter, impressed with his amiable disposition and handsomeness, bestowed upon him an epithet *Sohna* (the beautiful). Nand Lal wished his son to follow in his footsteps and took him to Sri Guru Har Krishan whose sacred glimpse and divine presence completely transformed him. Ram Dev decided to remain in attendance upon the Guru. He took upon himself the duty of carrying water for *Guru ka langar* and sprinkling water upon the ground where *sangat* met morning and evening. When Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur set out on his travels through the Malwa region of Punjab in 1665 CE, Bhai Ram Dev was in his retinue performing his usual chores. At every sojourn he would sprinkle water on the dusty ground in such a way that it seemed as if it was a gentle shower of rain. According to *Mehma Parkash*, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, pleased at his service,

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nicknamed him *Mihan* (bringer of rain). The name stuck, and Ram Dev began to be called Bhai Mihan.

While at Dhamtan, during the course of his preaching tour, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur bestowed upon him a drum and a banner as symbols of spiritual sovereignty, and released him from his personal attendance, enabling him to preach on his own. Ram Dev preached mainly in Northern India. He also once waited upon Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Sri Guru Gobind Singh was so much pleased with his contribution to the spread of Sikh religion that he conferred the suffix '*Sahib*' (master) to his earlier epithet '*Mihan*' with which he had been earlier honoured by Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. From the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, he began to be called as Mihan Sahib. He had a number of followers, who established *deras* in different parts of the country as far as Patna, Bhagalpur, (in Bihar), Cuttack (Orissa), Amravati, Kohlapur, Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh), Khan Gam, Band Rameshwar (in Southern India), Sadhu Bela Sakhar (Sind in Pakistan), and Kandahar (Afghanistan). Mihan Sahib's most important disciples were Bhai Nanak Bakhsh, Bhai Manh Das, Bhai Sidkia, Bhai Gurdial, Bhai Tehal Das. Bhai Man Singh, Lakhmir, Mall Ji, Surat Ram, Magni Ji, Bhola Das, Ram Das, etc., and their preaching centres became very famous and influence wielding. Their followers also established many *deras*, the prominent among them being Dera Magni Ram at Patiala, Sadhu Bela near Sakhar (now in Sind, Pakistan), Sangalwala Akhara at Amritsar (established in 1795 CE). Bawa Pritam Das, in cooperation with Santokh Das, did two remarkable things. The first important thing was that he organised Panchayati Akhara at Triveni (Allahabad) in 1779 CE, which, in due course, established its sub-centres at Kankhal (Hardwar), Kurukshetra, Ujjain and Godavri river in the south. Secondly, he was responsible for digging out a small canal, known as Hansli from the river Ravi right up to Harmandir Sahib, to supply water to the holy tank, known as Ramsar.

BAKHT MALIÉ

These Udasis regarded Bakht Mal as their mentor. He belonged to Nakka region of the Punjab, and was a devout Sikh. In the time of Sri Guru Hargobind, he was a *masand* at Kabul. According to '*Gar Udasin Mat Darpan*', he embraced Sikhism in the time of Sri Guru Har Rai. But more acceptable view is that he was converted to be a Sikh under the impact of Sri Guru Hargobind, but *Bakhshish* was conferred on him by Sri Guru Gobind Singh. H.A. Rose writes :

> Bakht Mal – Sadhu, a Sikh sect founded by Bakht Mal when Sri Guru Gobind Singh destroyed *masands* or tax gatherers. One of them, by name Bakht Mal, took refuge with Mata, a Gujjar woman (Mata Gujri — Rose misstated, perhaps he could not understand Mata Gujri was a proper noun and was the name of the mother of Sri Guru Gobind Singh), who disguised him in woman's clothes putting bangles on his wrist and a *nath* or nose ring. This attire he adopted permanently and the *mahants* of his *Gaddi* still wear bangles. His followers are said to be also called *Bakhshish Sadh*, but this is open to doubt. The headquarters of the sect appears to be unknown.[14]

Observation of H.A. Rose clearly supports at least this view that Bakht Mal was

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blessed with the duty of preaching Sikh religion by Sri Guru Gobind Singh at the recommendation of his mother. From the account made available by Rose, it can also be surmised that he was a devoted Sikh holding the rank of *masand.*

Bhai Randhir Singh, who launched a probe into the activities of Bakht Mal and his followers in the fifties of the 20th century, found their centres at Bahawalpur, Multan, Karachi (Sind, Pakistan) and Santal Rai in Uttar Pradesh. Bakht Mal's important followers were Balak Rai, Charan Das, Santokh Das, *et al.* With the passage of time this order merged into the order of Bhagat Bhagwan.

JIT MALIÉ

Jit Malié trace their origin to Jit Mal, who was a dedicated Sikh holding the rank of a *masand.* When Sri Guru Gobind Singh called *masands* at Anandpur Sahib in 1754 BK (1697 CE) to chastise them for their dereliction of their assigned duties, he found Jit Mal immaculately pure and honest. He blessed him and allowed him to continue to disseminate the message of Sikhism among the people and to link them with the Guru directly.[15] Jit Mal felt happy and highly encouraged. He took *pahul* and continued to propagate the Gurus' dispensation. His followers also followed the path shown by their mentor. Some time in the eighteenth century, Jit Malié merged their identity with the followers of Balu Hasna.[16]

Other Prominent Udasis

Besides the well-known *Bakhshishan* there were some less known Udasis. Among them, Giani Gian Singh has mentioned Gurdas ké, Sodhi Dakhni Rai ké, Sandhu Nand Lal ké, Dewané, Hira Dasié and Ram Dasié.

RAM DASIÉ

Ram Das ké Udasis trace their origin to Bhai Gurditta, the grandson of Baba Budha of Ram Das, district Amritsar. Ram Das ké Udasis established their sub-centres at Naine Kot and Muradabad. To begin with, their headquarter was in the village Ram Das.[17]

SODHI DAKHNI RAI KÉ

The Udasis, known as Sodhi Dakhni Rai ké, consider Sodhi Dakhni Rai, a scion of Sodhi Meharban's family as their original mentor. They preached the message of the Gurus mostly in Malwa. Gharachon in Sangrur district was their main centre. Some of the Udasis of this order preached in Sindh, Sialkot District and Uttar Pradesh.

DEWANÉ

Dewané owe their origin to Baba Bhindar Das, one of the followers of Manohar Das Meharban (son of Pirthi Chand). He met Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib while he was on his tour in the Malwa region. Bhindar Das was in ecstasy. Sri Guru Har Rai was highly pleased with him and honoured him with the appellation of 'Dewan Sahib'. Bhinder now committed himself to preaching of Sikh ideology. He extricated himself from the influence of Meharban and became a devout Sikh. His example was followed by some of his friends also. He and his followers established different preaching centres mostly in the Malwa (Punjab). According to H.A. Rose, "They are for the

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most part non-celibate. Outwardly they keep the hair uncut and wear a necklace of shells with a peacock feather in the *Pagri* (turban). They follow the *Adi Granth* and repeat the true name. Their important centres were Patiala, Ambala, Raipur, Amritsar and Pirkot."[18]

HIRA DASIÉ

Hira Dasié were the followers of Hira Das, who was a cobbler by caste and lived at village Sursingh in the district of Amritsar. During the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, they established a big preaching centre. Hira Das was a great preacher and a scholar. Quite a number of booklets containing Guru's hymns handwritten by him or his followers are available.

Part of Sikh Mainstream

On the basis of the history sheet of different orders of Udasis, it can safely be surmised that Udasis were a part of the Sikh mainstream. They were highly respected and substantially helped by the Guru. Their idiosyncrasies apart, they spread Sikhism far and wide. They highly respected Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and installed it with decorum at their *deras*. After the winding up of the order of the *masands* by Sri Guru Gobind Singh on the eve of the creation of the Khalsa, their importance rose automatically because there was none else except their order to take up the preaching work exclusively. They went to the remote corners of India and established missionary centres in all places up to Kanyakumari and Rameshwaram. They learnt the languages of these regions, prepared copies of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and installed them in these places. Besides, they interpreted the sacred scripture, and acquainted the people with the achievements of their Gurus as best as they could.

When Sri Guru Gobind Singh evacuated the fort of Anandgarh, an *Udasi* monk, Gurbakhsh Das, undertook to look after the local shrines such as Sis Ganj and Kesgarh Sahib.

Missionary Work

When after the demise of Sri Guru Gobind Singh one Gulab Rai, an imposter, proclaimed himself Guru at Anandpur and tried to take possession of the shrines, Gurbakhsh Das thwarted his nefarious designs. Gurbakhsh Das' successors continued to look after the Anandpur shrines until their management was taken over in recent times by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. At Nanded, where Sri Guru Gobind Singh passed away, Mahant Ishar Das Udasi performed the services at *darbar* of Sri Guru Gobind Singh and managed the shrine from 1708 CE to 1725 CE. He was succeeded by his disciple Gopal Das Udasi, who remained in charge of the Darbar Hazur Sahib up to 1746 CE. Gopal Das was succeeded by his disciple Saran Das Udasi, who served the shrine for a long period of thirty years. After Saran Das, the control of the Darbar passed into the hands of the Sikhs who had, by that time, come from the Punjab in considerable numbers and settled in Nanded. In 1711 CE, an Udasi *sadhu*, Sant Gopal Das, popularly known as Goddar Faqir, was appointed

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granthi at the Harmandir at Amritsar by Bhai Mani Singh, whom Mata Sundar Kaur had deputed to serve as a custodian of Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar. Gopal Das was later replaced by another Udasi, Chanchal Singh, a pious and devoted Sikh.[19]

According to a rough estimate, about fifty per cent, if not more, nearly correct recensions of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, *vars* of Bhai Gurdas and works of Bhai Nand Lal were written by Udasi scribes and preserved in Sikh shrines supervised by Udasis. As Udasis, like Nirmalas and Sewapanthis, were orgainsed by the Gurus themselves, they were respected by the Sikhs as a part of the *Panth*. Just as Khalsa had complete military responsibility for military activities, the Udasis were given equal and free participation in religious and cultural affairs. Over a hundred prominent Udasi saints and mystics are well known for their missionary work in Kabul, Dhaka, Gorakhmatta, Puri, Rameshwaram, Allahabad, Hardwar and a number of places in Punjab. Even in Azerbaijan and Afghanistan, they reached and preached the gospel of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. This fact is eloquently vouchsafed by an inscription found on the gate of a temple dedicated to the Guru and built long back by Zoroastrians at Baku.

As time rolled on and the Sikhs entered eighteenth century, the Sikhs had to wage a struggle, first against the Mughals and then against the Afghans. They did succeed in 1710 CE in ousting the Mughal government from a large part of the Punjab and established Khalsa sovereignty under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur. But it was short-lived and ended in 1716 CE, lost to the Mughal rulers. Banda Singh Bahadur was butchered at Delhi and orders were issued for the wholesale massacre of the Sikhs. The persecution continued till about 1765 CE when the Sikhs occupied Sirhind Sarkar again.

During this period, the *Udasis'* role was commendable. They established themselves in different gurdwaras as *granthis*. Since they were different from Khalsa in appearance, they were not targeted by either the Mughals or by the Afghans. Thus they escaped persecution. At times they felt threatened by the Mughal and Afghan rulers, and some of them found safety in leaving Punjab and settling elsewhere in India. Quite a number of them settled at different religious centres such as Hardwar, Allahabad, Nanakmatta, etc. bringing themselves face to face with different religions and their ideologies. This thing affected their thinking and outlook. Dislodged from their original places, some of them felt desperate and took to identifying themselves with the mainstream religion prevalent in a particular area. This is one of the major reasons why Udasis started incorporating customs of Hindus in their chartered programmes. Their counterparts in Punjab also followed this trend, although not to the same extent.

How devoted and committed the Udasis were as Sikh missionaries can be assessed from the following incident reported in Thomas Hardwicks' *Narrative of a Journey to Srinagar*.[20]

Udasis as well as Nirmalas had pitched their camps, hoisted their flags and started *Akhand Path* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib three days before the Kumbh Mela at Hardwar. *Naga Sadhus* also called *Gosain Sanyasis* were given magisterial control of the fair both by Marathas and the British, and they charged every Hindu pilgrim eight *annas* to one

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rupee. They moved about armed flaunting their deadly weapons, and would not hesitate from firing and flogging anyone who did not fulfil their demand. Captain Hardwicke relates how these *Nagas* slavishly served British officers who were there by offering them special facilities.

The Udasis and Nirmalas refused to give any money on the plea that they were not Hindu but Sikh missionaries. *Nagas* at first threatened and then carried out their threats by stopping the recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and burning their flag. Nirmalas went away quietly but the Udasis resisted. They were brutally attacked by all types of weapons and many of them were killed. Sri Guru Granth Sahib was chopped with axes. All pilgrims who had come for *Guru ka langar* were either killed or injured. The incident took place in April 1796 CE.

When the news reached the Sikh *Sardars* such as Rai Singh, Sher Singh and Maharaja of Patiala, they rushed to the spot. The Udasis who had been killed were cremated, the flag was hoisted and the recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was completed under armed protection. On April 10, when the pilgrims melted away and *Naga Sadhus* were counting their collections, the Sikh *Sardars* attacked them with firing and killed everyone that came their way. From that day onward, the Nirmala and Udasi saints were never taxed but were given special facilities for preaching the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in Hardwar and Kurukshetra fairs.

The Sikh *sardars*, who had established their principalities in trans-Satluj and cis-Satluj Punjab towards the end of eighteenth century, were very liberal when it came to sanctioning grants to religious places. Almost every prominent Sikh gurdwara or *ashram* got a sizeable landed property attached to it. Udasi centres popularly known as *akharas* were also granted huge properties with the result that their income grew handsomely, which made them greedy, morally corrupt and derelict in their duties. They started preserving and promoting their vested interests, delinking gurdwaras from Sikh *sangat*, and managed these in such a way as if they were temples. This thing indeed suited them because participation of *sangat* in the affairs of gurdwaras clashed with their interest of being the sole masters of influence, offerings and properties of gurdwaras / *ashrams*. But all this they did with such finesse that they continued to be held in high esteem, generally speaking. In the mid-nineteenth century, the number of Udasi establishments that received state patronage and found mention in official record exceeded 250.[21] Most of these *akharas* were at the places either associated with or sanctified by the Gurus, or centres where they found ready audience to preach their ideology.

The tendencies of Udasis to deform or distort the message of the Guru got further strengthened during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, although there was no open cleavage between the mainstream Sikhs and the Udasis, and the Sikhs still looked upon them as Sikh missionaries. The number of Udasi orders was more than a dozen by the end of Sikh Rule in 1849 CE.[22]

The *Udasis'* orders have been open to all castes and professions. In religious practices, they differ from the Sikhs in certain respects. Their *Ardas* is different from that of Sikhs and they do not subscribe to the Sikh rites. Ringing of bells (*ghanti* or

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gharial), blowing of instruments (*Narsingha* or *Singhi*) form part of their religious service, which are non-existent in Sikh religious service. They do not hesitate to worship icons of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Baba Sri Chand, while icon worship is prohibited in mainstream Sikhism. Their salutations are *Waheguru* (Glory of God), *Gajo ji Waheguru* (Hail aloud the glorious Lord) or *Alakh* (Hail the Unknowable). The Udasis believe that after gaining *matra* one can attain *Param Tatva* (the highest truth) and achieve *mukti* (release). The literal meaning of *matra* is a measure or quantity which stands in prosody and grammar for the length of time required to pronounce a short vowel. But in Udasi tradition *matra* has acquired a new meaning, and it signifies an incantation or sacred text. According to Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, "An Udasis *matra* is the sacred formula addressed to the disciples as counsel and advice."[23] There are considerable number of these *matra*s attributed to Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Baba Sri Chand, Baba Gurditta, Almast and Balu Hasna. The Udasis without exception keep Sri Guru Granth Sahib in their monasteries or *akharas* and profess faith in all the Gurus from Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Sri Guru Gobind Singh, although side by side they show keen interest in the chain of succession which descended from Sri Chand down to the *mahant* (superior) of the branch they follow.

Udasis' dress has never been uniform. Some of them wear white, while others prefer green, ochre or red coloured garments. Some of them prefer to be naked wearing nothing except a brass chain around their waist. Some wear matted or uncut hair, while some others prefer to be cleanshaven. Quite a number of Udasis used *tilak*, wore the *janeoo* (sacred cord) and *mala* (rosary)[24] towards the end of the eighteenth century. Besides preaching the word of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Udasi centres had been serving as seminaries of Sikh learning. *Chelas*, i.e., disciples, sat at the feet of the head of the monastery who instructed them in Sikh and other classical texts. Udasi centre at Amritsar, Brahm Buta Akhara, ran a Gurmukhi School, which was renowned enough to attract a large number of pupils. Some Udasi centres imparted training in the Indian system of medicines and physiology as well. One such seat was the Bunga of Pandit Sarup Das Udasi, at Amritsar, who was a great scholar as well as an authority on *Charak Samhita*.

In 1849 CE, Punjab was occupied by the British. The gurdwara officials, mostly Udasis, began to care more for the views of the government than for their duties. In this process, they went a step further. They made the most of the opportunity of fresh revenue assessment in the province to get the land endowments of the gurdwaras under their charge entered in their personal names, with the specific purpose of turning gurdwara properties into private property to be used or disposed of in anyway they liked. They further claimed the right of their descendants to inherit this property and showed no hesitation in appointing their successors from amongst members of their families. The Endowment Act framed by the British helped them in this process. Their conduct too did not match their exalted status. They had become loose in morals, touching the bottom of profligacy, sloth and sinful living. Besides, they started presenting Hinduised version of Sikhism.

The religious derelictions by the Udasis and other officiants of gurdwaras and

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akharas galled the reformers, and spurred them not only to reform gurdwaras but also to wrest control of gurdwara managements from Udasis. This led to the Gurdwara Reform Movement. After a long struggle spanning over nearly five years, the movement succeeded, and the ownership and management of historical shrines passed into the hands of a democratically elected apex body called the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) by virtue of enactment of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925 CE. Even then some of the Udasi incumbents of the gurdwaras continued to occupy gurdwaras, which were not historical but had considerable properties, by declaring that these were not Sikh gurdwaras but Udasi '*deras*'. They removed from such places Sri Guru Granth Sahib, as also any monuments and documents which could testify that it was not a *dera* but a gurdwara. The Udasis even succeeded in securing court decrees, declaring themselves as Hindus. Since the jurisdiction of Sikh Gurdwaras Act did not go beyond Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh, the gurdwaras / *deras* existing outside these territories continued to be owned and controlled by the Udasis, who spread the message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib to the non-Sikhs in the regions in which they live even to this day.

— *S.S.G.*

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NIRMALAS

Introductory

There is no provision or place for any sects or sub-sects within the Sikh tradition. However, there are certain sects, called *sampardai* in Sikh idiom, found among the Sikhs. Nirmalas are one of them.

Nirmala scholars have made significant contribution to Sikh literature. Almost in all fields of Sikh studies, viz., Sikh theology, *Gurbani*, and its exegesis and translation of Hindu classics for comparative studies, they have done commendable work. Their contribution to Sikh historiography is a pioneering one. A monumental work on the Sikh Gurus was produced by Bhai Santokh Singh in the form of *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*. It was completed in the year 1900 BK, corresponding to 1843 CE.

Another Nirmala stalwart in the field of Sikh history was Giani Gian Singh. He was the first man to write a complete Sikh history from the times of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to the modern times. He realised that the traditions were an important source of Sikh history. So he travelled throughout his life to find the old places connected with the Gurus and Sikh history and collected anecdotes preserved in oral history. Subsequently he wrote *Twarikh-i-Guru Khalsa* which is considered as one of the important source books of Sikh history.

Origin of the Nirmala Sampardai

The word '*Nirmal*' is a synonymous with the Persian word *Khalsa* and implies pure, pious, unsullied, etc.[1] It has often been used in the ancient Indian religious lore in this sense. In the Sikh tradition, the term stands for a specific group among the Sikhs known for their learning in Sanskrit language, Indian religions and especially for their interpretation of scriptures from the *Vedantic* perspective. They have played an important role in the development of Sikh exegetical studies. Their works, historical, theological or exegetical, are also marked by their pedantic style.

As for the origin of the sect, mainly two theories are advanced by different scholars.[2] According to one view, which has the support of certain Nirmala scholars only, the

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Nirmala *sampardai* came into being with Sri Guru Nanak Dev. In support of this theory they quote certain verses from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib,[3] as well as from Bhai Gurdas.[4] Since the term '*Nirmal*' has been used in his hymns by the first Sikh spiritual preceptor Sri Guru Nanak Dev also, these scholars hold that Sri Guru Nanak Dev was the founder of this *sampardai*. The question that requires resolution here is : Which shade of meaning does the word '*Nirmal*', as used in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, convey ? Undoubtedly, it is only the metaphysical meaning.[5] And, obviously, Bhai Gurdas' reference to the *Nirmal Panth* does not connote the *Nirmal sampardai*, but the Sikh tradition in general. To explain the verse in any other way would amount to distortion of the text as well as tradition.

According to the second point of view, the origin of the Nirmalas is traced back to the days of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikh tradition holds that the Guru, when he was staying at Paonta from 1685-88 CE, engaged a number of scholars to translate Sanskrit classics into current Braj and Punjabi with a view to bringing them within easy reach of the less educated laity.[6] The Guru is also said to have asked one such Sanskrit scholar, Pandit Raghu Nath by name, to teach Sanskrit to the Sikhs, but he politely excused himself on the plea that Sanskrit was *devbhasha* (language of the gods) and that it could not be taught to the low castes. Sikhism outrightly rejects casteism. Sri Guru Gobind Singh, therefore, sent five Sikhs — Ram Singh, Bir Singh, Ganda Singh, Karam Singh and Saina Singh to Kashi to study Sanskrit and *Vedic* literatures. Kashi was then the most famous centre of Hindu and Sanskrit learning. It is also said that these five Sikhs wore white robes, and since white colour is symbolic of purity and piety, the Brahmins of Kashi gave them the epithet *Nirmala*.[7] These Sikhs soon acquired proficiency in Sanskrit language and *Vedic* thought. On their return to Anandpur, the Guru is said to have deputed them to teach other Sikhs Sanskrit and ancient Indian lore.[8] These five Sikhs and later on all those who followed them in their learning and way of life came to be called *Nirmalas*.

Bhai Dargaha Singh, who had travelled to the south in Sri Guru Gobind Singh's entourage, took up dwellings at Kankhal in 1710 CE after his return from Nanded. Here he helped Rai Ahmad, the local chief, in his fight against the Rohillas. The chief was so pleased with the help rendered by him that he asked Dargaha Singh to take possession of as much land as he could. Later on in 1726 CE he gave away this land to him in writing as well.[9] This *dera* set up by him at Kankhal is the central organisation of Nirmalas which still exists. In the history of Nirmalas this is also the first known case of a Nirmala lending hand in a fight and receiving a *jagir* in return.[10] There are several other instances of the Nirmalas accepting *jagirs* from Sikh chiefs and setting up *deras* during the 18th century, but this was owing to their scholarly accomplishments in theology and philosophy, and their commitment to the spread of Sikh gospel.

There may be differences of opinion as regards the origin of the Nirmalas. There is, however, complete unanimity on the point that they are a class of scholars among the Sikhs. They try to explain Sikhism in the context of ancient Indian religious lore, especially the *Vedic* perspective. They were equally proficient in Sikh thought and in

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ancient Indian (*Vedic*, *Puranic* and even *Sramanic*) lore. During the lifetime of Sri Guru Gobind Singh they are believed to have remained in his company. When the Guru breathed his last in 1708 CE at Nanded, they seem to have returned to the north and dispersed to different places. Since the aim of their life was to preach the Gurus' word and to propagate Sikhism, they settled down at various pilgrimage centres where they could get easy audiences.

Spread of the Nirmalas and the Central Nirmala Organization

As these Nirmalas settled down at different centres of Hindu pilgrimage, they found that a good number of preachers of Hinduism were already settled there. The latter belonged to various Hindu ascetic orders. Each one of their *deras* represented a different school of thought. So the Nirmalas had an opportunity at hand to have a dialogue with them also. There is, however, no known instance of their dialogue taking the form of an ugly polemic. On the other hand, the devotees who thronged to such places on certain auspicious days, formed a ready audience for them whom they could explicate the tenets of the Gurus.

Some of these Nirmalas settled down at Hardwar, Allahabad and Varanasi where they established their centres of learning, many of which exist even today. Others came back to Punjab late in the 18th century and founded their centres at different places with liberal donations from local Sikh chieftains, who had established their sovereignty over Punjab by then. Those settled at Hindu centres of pilgrimage as well as those who thronged these places on certain days took out processions (*shahis*) like other *sadhus*, and held serious theological debates with saint-scholars of other religious denominations. These scholastic exercises were carried out with deep conviction and passion. Since most of the Nirmalas were accomplished scholars of Sanskrit language, Indian theology and philosophy, and had a deep and thorough understanding of Sikh scripture and thought, they usually had an edge over their rivals. It was perhaps an outcome of such rivalry as well as of the humiliation that the others had to face at the hands of the Nirmala scholars, that a physical confrontation took place at Hardwar at the time of a *Kumbh* festival. In those days there were no proper arrangements for the stay of Nirmalas or for the devotees who came to listen to them. However, the *Udasis*, *Sanyasis* and all other sects had their own arrangements for the board and lodging of the holy men of their tradition as well as for the devotees. The Nirmalas used to have their meals in the *langar* of the *Udasi deras*, but in this process sometimes they had to suffer severe indignities.

During the *Kumbh* of 1855 CE, the Nirmalas called a huge assembly at Hardwar with the specific aim of selecting a *mahant* or chief for their *sampardai*. Up to this time they had no central organization to streamline and monitor their activities.[11] This assemblage of about sixty or seventy Nirmala savants appointed Baba Mahitab Singh (d. 1871 CE) of Rishikesh as the first *Sri Mahant* (priest) of the Nirmalas. Thereafter in 1861 CE, the Phulkian chiefs of Patiala, Nabha and Jind, who had deep regard for Mahitab Singh, invited him to Patiala, so that they could, in consultation with him, do

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something to put the Nirmala order on a sound footing. In a meeting of these Phulkian chiefs, the *raja* of Faridkot and several other minor Sikh chiefs with Mahant Mahitab Singh, it was decided that the *haveli* of the *sardars* of Chanarthal at Patiala be converted into a Nirmala *akhara*, and it be named Nirmal Panchayati Akhara. The maharaja of Patiala donated a sum of Rs. 82,000/- and two villages for this *akhara*, whereas the chiefs of Nabha and Jind gave Rs. 16,000/- plus one village and Rs. 20,000/- and two villages, respectively.[12] Others also contributed according to their capacity. Formal inauguration of this *akhara*, also called Dharam Dhuja, took place on 7th August, 1862 CE. They also agreed to contribute towards expenses on *Kumbh* and such other festivals as well as on the personal needs of the Nirmalas. A *Dastur-ul-Amal* or code of conduct was also prepared on *Savan sudi* 12, 1905 BK (1862 CE) for the smooth functioning of the *akhara*.[13]

At the time of setting up the Nirmal Panchayati Akhara, it was also agreed upon to set up four 'wandering' *akharas*, and each one of them was put under the charge of a *mahant*. The four *mahants* appointed at that time were Bhola Singh, Kahan Singh, Karam Singh and Nihal Singh.[14] Thereafter many more centres of Nirmalas came to be established in different corners of India. Since each of these centres had huge properties attached to it, the office of *mahant* which carried an aura of spirituality and piety, became hereditary with the passage of time. In the course of time, preaching of *gurmat* and spread of education became subordinate to the management of properties. This trend brought about spiritual and moral degeneration which caused the downfall of the Nirmalas. Some of the *mahants* got married and turned the *dera* into private property.

Dastur-ul-Amal

Nirmalas have always been a *sampardai* given to learning and preaching within the Sikh mainstream. It did not originate in opposition to Sikhism nor did it ever act as a schismatic group seeking to function parallel to or outside the Sikh tradition. The *Dastur-ul-Amal* or the code of conduct, which was first formulated at Patiala in 1862 CE, was apparently aimed at smooth functioning of the organization, the Nirmal Panchayati Akhara.[15] The only *Dastur-ul-Amal* that is signed by the three Phulkian chiefs can be called genuine. There are also some other versions of it given in various Nirmala works, besides the one given by Bhai Kahn Singh in his *Mahan Kosh*. The Patiala text is generally taken to be authentic, but Giani Gian Singh's summary which contains eleven clauses, raises certain doubts. How can an eleven-clause text, given by a Nirmala scholar, be a summary of the one which comprises only nine clauses ? Does that make Bhai Kahn Singh's view, that it contained thirty clauses, more convincing ? At any rate, the *Dastur-ul-Amal* prepared with the concurrence of the Phulkian chiefs is considered authentic among the Nirmalas. The original is said to be preserved by them in their Kankhal *dera*.

The *Dastur-ul-Amal* at Kankhal is said to possess nine clauses in all. Clause 1 declares that Bhai Mahitab Singh is the chief of the *akhara* and that after his death, his

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successor will take over. Clause 2 refers to the sum of Rs. 82,000/- donated by Patiala state and to the manner of its use. Clause 3 declares that treasury of the *akhara* will be under the charge of Mahitab Singh. He could also make over this responsibility to someone of his choice. Clause 4 authorizes Bhai Mahitab Singh to make or change any other *mahants* as he thought fit. Clause 5 puts the condition on all residing in the *akhara* not to keep any money on their person. All such money be deposited in the treasury. Clause 6 authorizes Bhai Mahitab Singh to appoint anyone on a responsible position and punish those found violating this code. Interestingly, there is no mention of what this code should be. It was this clause which caused Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha to forfeit the grant Nabha state had given to the *akhara*, when the Maharaja found the Nirmala *mahants* not following the Sikh / Khalsa *rahit*. The Nirmalas remained adamant, saying that there is no stipulation in the *Dastur-ul-Amal* to follow the *Khalsa Rahit*. So the Maharaja had to give back the grant to the Nirmalas. Clause 7 says that if Mahitab Singh wants to appoint, during his lifetime, his successor, he must consult the three Phulkian states. Clause 8 authorizes the Phulkian states to replace any of the successors of Bhai Mahitab Singh, if he is found wanting in his personal piety and character. Clause 9 says that the functioning of the Panchayati Akhara be carried as per the clauses of this document.[16]

Role in the Spread of Gurmat

There is no denying the fact that Nirmalas are a class of scholars very proficient in Sanskrit language and *Vedic* lore as well as in the understanding of Sikh literature. A peculiar characteristic of their exegesis of Sikh scripture is their tendency to look at it from the *Vedantic* perspective. Otherwise, they were ever keen to spread the message of the Gurus far and wide, and made all possible efforts in this behalf.

The Nirmala savants set up their centres at almost all places of Hindu pilgrimage. In the early 18th century, when Bhai Mahitab Singh settled down at Kankhal (near Hardwar), such a decision by him and other Nirmalas like him might have been influenced partly by the desire to keep away from the Punjab, where the Mughal government of the day followed anti-Sikh policies to the extent of exterminating the community. However, they also had in mind the ready audience that kept visiting such places throughout the year and that thronged in large numbers on certain auspicious days of the Hindu calendar. An important section of the Nirmalas preferred to keep constantly wandering from one place to another, preaching *gurmat*. Such wandering groups also came to these centres of Hindu pilgrimage on certain important occasions such as the *Kumbh* festival. Thus, these Nirmalas preached the Gurus' word by way of discourses on such occasions.

During such gatherings at the sacred places of Hindus, it was natural that the Brahmins did not like what these Nirmalas preached. One such controversy arose at Trimbak, near Nasik in Maharashtra. The Brahmins' objection here was that the Nirmalas and the Sikh religion they belonged to, gave no importance to the caste system and that people from all castes came to them, and bathed in the Kushavrat *sarovar*, where otherwise

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only the Brahmins had the privilege to bathe. The Nirmalas, they alleged, also took some low-caste people along to visit the temple which otherwise was a taboo to such persons as per their custom. One could enter into and worship in the temple bareheaded and with only one-piece unsewn cloth around one's body. These Nirmalas and their followers wore turban as well as *kachhehra* (an undergarment) as they entered the temple. The Brahmins' resistance led to an open discussion. The Nirmala representative, Sant Diwan Singh of Thikriwala, prevailed upon the Brahmins proving the futility of the caste system as well as of putting on only one-piece cloth. Since then only the Nirmalas have the right to enter this temple with covered head (turban) and wearing sewn clothes (*kachhehra*).[17] Such discussions arose at several other places as well, and the Nirmala scholars were always able to prove the futility of many arid rituals and the relevance of the Gurus' tenets.

Apart from oral discourses, these Nirmalas had also been putting their ideas to pen. Some of them produced works of great literary merit. Their works mainly covered history of the Sikh faith as well as of their own *sampardai*, grammar, exegesis and translations of many ancient Sanskrit classics and Hindu scriptures. The Nirmala scholars who made contributions in Sanskrit, include Pandit Udhav Singh, Deva Singh, Nihal Singh and Man Singh Shastri. Sadhu Gulab Singh, Tara Singh Narotam, Nihal Singh, Gobind Singh, Arjun Singh Muni and many others made significant contribution to Sikh literature in Braj / Hindi language. Among those who made a mark in Punjabi are included Bhai Santokh Singh, Sant Sher Singh, Sadhu Gurdit Singh, Giani Gian Singh, Giani Badan Singh, Mahant Ganesha Singh, Dayal Singh and Hari Singh. The total literary corpus produced by them is varied in content, rich in quality, and voluminous in quantity.

The exegetical works of the Nirmalas constitute among themselves a distinct school in the history of the Sikh exegesis. The Nirmala school of exegesis is an important landmark in the development of hermeneutical studies in Sikhism. Among the prominent Nirmala exegetes can be included Tara Singh Narotam, Sadhu Gurdit Singh, Giani Badan Singh and Pandit Kartar Singh Dakha. They prepared *prayays*, *koshas* and *tikas* of *Gurbani*. Some peculiar characteristics of this school of exegesis are the *Vedic* perspective, multiple meanings of a verse, critique of some earlier *tikas*, inclusion of Puranic legends, etc. Tara Singh Narotam was perhaps the first Sikh scholar to think of preparing an exegesis of the complete Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and it is said that he was able to complete it, but could not get the whole of it published.[18]

Since the main task before the Nirmalas was to acquire and then impart learning, they also started many schools and colleges. At Kashi where the first batch of the Nirmalas was sent to acquire proficiency in Sanskrit language and Hindu scriptures, they established several institutions for those who came there to learn. The Nirmal Sanskrit Vidyalas in Chetan Math and Sangat Lahore Tola have been among the pioneer Nirmala institutions. A Sanskrit Mahavidyala also came up at Kankhal. This is being financed by the Nirmal Panchayati Akhara. The *deras* of Dyal Singh Thakur and Baba Mishra Singh in Amritsar were also important centres to learn *bani*. Even in modern

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times, the Nirmalas have established several colleges and schools in Punjab and other Indian states. Endeavour for the spread of knowledge, especially that of Sikh religion, has ever been a commitment, a passion with them.

The Nirmalas made a significant contribution to the Sikh tradition by maintaining and looking after several places of historical and religious importance. At least a few of them might have been lost to the community but for the services rendered by them. For example, the gurdwara at Kankhal is a memorial to the visit of the Sikh Gurus to that place. The place, also known as Bara Dargaha Singh, was well maintained first by Mahant Dargaha Singh and after him by the Nirmal Akhara. Several such shrines as the ones at Prayag and Patna have since the early 18th century been maintained by the Nirmalas. Some Nirmala saints have also rendered voluntary service to repair, rebuild or look after several other places of importance.[19]

The role of Nirmalas in the management of Sikh shrines and in the Sikh struggle against the *Udasis'* hereditary control of gurdwaras and their misuse of the properties attached to these shrines, has been quite remarkable. They sided with the mainstream Sikhs during the Nirankari, Namdhari and Akali movements. They suffered persecution with their Sikh brethren during the Jaito and Guru-ka-Bagh agitations, and underwent jail terms.[20] Keeping in view the significant and positive role the Nirmalas played, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee passed a resolution of appreciation and also resolved to withdraw court cases against those managements which had been in the hands of the Nirmalas.[21] This gesture on the part of the SGPC was rare, and indicated the place of special importance the Nirmalas enjoyed.

Some Important Nirmala Scholars

As we have already said, the Nirmalas constitute a class of scholars among the Sikh scholars with a sound background of Sanskrit and ancient Indian religious lore besides a thorough understanding of the Sikh canonical literature, history and doctrines. To choose a few from amongst them is a very difficult task and any such list can by no means be considered exhaustive. Since this choice has to be made for reasons of space and since biographical details about many of them are rather scanty, we have selected only six of them to be discussed here, in chronological order as representatives of different shades of Nirmala contribution to Sikh studies.

PANDIT GULAB SINGH

Pandit Gulab Singh, born in 1732 CE, at village Selkham, in Lahore district, in a peasant family, took to a life of letters by choice.[22] As a small boy in his village, he learnt Gurmukhi from a *sadhu*, who also taught him to read the scripture. Under his influence, Gulab Singh became an ascetic, and left his house without the knowledge of his family. He reached Varanasi where he studied Sanskrit and *Vedic* thought. Perhaps Pandit Man Singh, a Nirmala scholar, initiated him into Sanskrit and *Vedic* studies. Gulab Singh expresses his indebtedness to him at many places in his works.

Gulab Singh has many works to his credit, all of them being in Braj language written in Gurmukhi script. It is said that the Brahmins at Varanasi felt jealous of the

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amazingly high degree of proficiency in Sanskrit and *Vedic* studies achieved by a Sudra (Gulab Singh was a Jat, peasant, by caste). They are said to have stealthily taken away manuscripts of his works and sunk them into the river. Only four manuscripts which, it is believed, were not with Gulab Singh at that time, survived. Gulab Singh did not retaliate, but he did not compose anything thereafter.

The four works, which survived that disaster, remained in manuscript form for more than a century before they got published. Two of these works, *Adhyatam Ramayan* and *Prabodhchandra Natak*, are translations of old Sanskrit texts; whereas the other two, *Bhavarasanmrit* and *Mokhpanth*, are his original compositions. Two more minor works, *Swapan Adhyaya* and *Karam Vipaka*, are also attributed to him. His *Bhavarasanmrit* (1777 CE) in Braj verse, is a treatise on rationalism and detachment. Prayer, Name, love for the Divine, good deeds, *karma*, *dharma*, detached living, and selfless service are among the subjects dilated upon in this work. His *Mokhpanth* (1778 CE) is a philosophical work dealing with the major schools of Indian philosophy, and suggesting *gurmat* as the best way to realise the ultimate goal of human life (*mokh*).

BHAI SANTOKH SINGH

Bhai Santokh Singh, a known Sikh poet and historian, was born on October 8, 1787 CE, at Nurdin village, also known as Sarai Nurdin, near Tarn Taran in Amritsar district. His father, Bhai Deva Singh, was a poor cloth-printer, but he was educated and well versed in Sikh sacred texts. After his preliminary education at home, Bhai Deva Singh sent his son to Giani Sant Singh of Amritsar who taught him Sikh Scripture and history, Sanskrit language and literature, poetics, philosophy and mythology, for about 15 years. Thereafter sometime around 1813 CE or a little earlier, Santokh Singh moved to Buria, an old town near Yamuna Nagar, to establish himself as a preacher, poet and writer. Here he completed his *Nam Kosh* (1821 CE) and *Sri Sri Guru Nanak Dev Prakash* (1823 CE) under the patronage of one Dial Singh (an army officer with the chief of Buria) on whose invitation Santokh Singh had shifted to Buria. These works soon acquired for Bhai Santokh Singh a great reputation as a poet and historian. The Kaithal chief, Bhai Udai Singh, invited him in 1825 CE to join his court. However, the poet served the Patiala court for some time before moving on to Kaithal where he played a long scholarly innings, 18 years to be precise. Here he wrote *Garab Ganjani Tika*, a commentary on the *Japu(Ji)*. The work, completed in 1829 CE, is a rejoinder to the *tika* of Anandghan, an *Udasi* scholar. The most important and the most voluminous work that he completed here during 1835-43 CE was the *Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, a versified history of the Gurus. During his stay here, he also translated *Valmiki Ramayana* in verse (1834 CE) and *Atam Puran* in prose.

Bhai Santokh Singh got married to Ram Kaur of Jagadhari during his stay at Buria. The couple had five sons and three daughters. Their descendents now live in Patiala as well as in Kaithal. The poet died on October 19, 1843 CE, and a shrine was constructed in the 1950s at his native village to perpetuate his memory.

PANDIT TARA SINGH NAROTAM

Pandit Tara Singh Narotam, born in 1822 CE, has been another renowned scholar

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of the Nirmala school who has made a significant contribution in the exegetical, lexicographical, theological and doctrinal aspects of Sikh studies. Born in Kalma village, near Qadian in the Gurdaspur district, Tara Singh's early life was spent under the influence of his father. Beyond that not many biographical details of his early life are available. In early 1840s, he left his village to join the hermitage of Sant Gulab Singh at Kurala in Hoshiarpur district. It was under his tutelage that Tara Singh was initiated into the Nirmala order, and given the initial training in Sikh texts. From there Tara Singh went to Amritsar, and thence to Kashi for higher learning. It was at Kashi that he acquired proficiency in Sanskrit language and Hindu religious lore. He is also said to have spent some time in the village of Nadia in the Santipur area of Bengal.

On the occasion of the *Ardh-Kumbh* of 1861 CE, he went over to Hardwar as did most of the other Nirmala scholars. By that time his fame as a scholar had spread far and wide, and this led the then *maharaja* of Patiala, Narinder Singh (1842-1862 CE), to extend him an invitation. Tara Singh accepted the patronage of the Patiala State, and made the Nirmala Panchayati Akhara (*Dharam Dhuja*) at Patiala his permanent seat. During his stay here, he imparted knowledge to many pupils as well as worked vigorously on several projects. Among his pupils here was the distinguished Sikh historian, Giani Gian Singh.[23] He was also appointed Sri Mahant of the Nirmala Sect in 1875 CE, the office he occupied till he breathed his last in 1891 CE.

Among the more important of his works are *Wahiguru Shabadarath* (1862), *Shabad Sur Kosh* (1866), *Tika Bhagat Bani Ka* (1872), *Granth Sri Gurmat Nirnaya Sagar* (1877), *Akal Murati Pradarshan* (1878), *Guru Vans Tarn Darpan* (1878), *Tika Guru Bhav Dipika* (1879), *Sri Guru Tirath Sangrahi* (1882), *Tika Sri Raga* (1885), *Granth Guru Girarth Kosh* (1889) and *Prikhia Prakaran* (1890). His *Sri Guru Tirath Sangrahi* is a pioneer work in the genre and gives the geographical location of each shrine, its religious and historical importance and the name of the sect to which its custodian at that time belonged. The book lists a total of 501 shrines sacred to the memory of the Gurus, followed by those erected in memory of the members of the Gurus' families and some important Sikhs. Interestingly, he travelled quite extensively to locate all these shrines and the information given is first-hand. Similarly, his *Granth Guru Girarth Kosh* and *Granth Sri Gurmat Nirnaya Sagar* are also pioneer works in the field of lexicography and theology / philosophy, respectively. In all these works, his Nirmala orientation is obvious. He accepts Sri Guru Nanak Dev as an incarnation of Vishnu and holds that he conformed to the path of the *Vedas*.

Tara Singh Narotam died in 1891 CE at Patiala, and was given a State funeral under instructions of the *maharaja* of Patiala.

GIANI GIAN SINGH

Giani Gian Singh, born on April 15, 1822 CE, at village Longowal in the present-day Sangrur district, was a poet and historian of renown. He received his early education, in Punjabi as well as Sanskrit, in his native village. At the age of 12, he was taken to Lahore by his maternal uncle Karam Singh, who served in the army of Maharaja Ranjit

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Singh. When he recited *Gurbani*, his melodious voice attracted attention of the listeners. Dhanna Sigh Malvai introduced him to the Maharaja who deputed him to recite *Sukhmani* for him daily. After the death of Ranjit Singh he returned to his native village and received appointment in the revenue office of the Patiala State. This appointment was in place of his uncle Karam Singh, who had died issueless fighting in the army of Maharaja Karam Singh of Patiala. Gian Singh also saw action as part of the Patiala army at Mudki during the first Anglo-Sikh war. He also took part in the Patiala expedition in aid of Jind State to curb rebels there, but was seriously wounded in the leg which made him quit service.[24]

Free from the obligations of government service, Gian Singh set out visiting places of historical importance in Sikh life. The events relating to the 1857 CE upheaval forced him to return to Punjab, and he sought tutelage of Tara Singh Narotam at Patiala who had just shifted there. His coming in contact with Tara Singh was fruitful in more than one way. Gian Singh not only helped his mentor in the preparation of his *Granth Guru Girarth Kosh*, but also completed his own *magnum opus*, the *Panth Parkash* (1880) — a versified history of the Sikhs in Braj. His other major work has been the *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*. Besides, he also authored *Suraj Parkash Vartak* (an abridged version in prose of Bhai Santokh Singh's *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth*), *Ramayan Bhai Mani Singh ji di*, *Twarikh Amritsar*, *Twarikh Lahore*, *Patit Pawan*, *Gurdham Sangrah*, *Bhupendranand*, *Itihas Bagarian*, and *Ripudaman Parkash*.

Though Giani Gian Singh was born in a village of the then Patiala State, he spent most of his creative years in Patiala, enjoyed the patronage of the Patiala rulers to the extent that he had the privilege of solemnizing the first marriage of Maharaja Bhupindra Singh of Patiala. Yet, the Nabha State, which had a rivalry with the Patiala State, considered him a relation of the Nabha chief Ripudaman Singh. Gian Singh and Ripudaman Singh's mothers came from the same village. Thus, Ripudaman Singh got Gian Singh whisked away in a car from Patiala to Nabha where he died on 24th September, 1921 CE.

SANT NIHAL SINGH

Not much biographical information is available about Sant Nihal Singh. We have only three books, published posthumously, which are credited to his name. The information included in the preface of one of these books comprises the only biographical details we have. Sant Gandhara Singh, who wrote the preface to it, seems to be a pupil of Nihal Singh, since he is throughout eulogistic about him.

Sant Nihal Singh was one of the pupils of Baba Khuda Singh of Lahore, who trained him in the Sikh sacred texts and the Indian religious lore. He soon became a renowned as an expert exponent of the Sikh Scriptural text, which brought a large number of devotees and pupils to him. He also composed poetry, mostly in Braj. Three of his works are extant — *Akal Natak*, *Nirmal Prabhakar* and *Sikhi Prabhakar*. He might have written several more works, but none of these is now traceable. The last two of the above mentioned three books were published in 1902 CE by Sant Gandhara Singh who claims that the author did write some more books, and that he

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passed away in 1900 CE. In this book the author, apart from eulogizing the ten Gurus, the Guru Granth and the Guru *Panth*, also describes the Sikh way of life and the qualities of an ideal Sikh. According to him, a true Sikh leads a life of piety; commits no wrong/evil to anybody; lives in constant harmony with the Will of God; is upright in thought, deed, and word; resists injustice and oppression; and is ever attached to the *Akal*.

DEVA SINGH NAROTAM

Pandit Deva Singh Narotam, son of Bhai Mahitab Singh, was born in Janetpura village, near Jagraon in Ludhiana district. The exact date or year of his birth is not known. He received his early education at his native village from Gurdit Singh who gave him lessons in the Sikh texts. Thereafter he sought tutelage first with Sant Natha Singh of Gurdwara Tapiana Sahib at Khadur and then Sant Mahna Singh, a *mahant* of the Nirmala monastery at Khadur, near Mullanpur in Ludhiana district. Mahna Singh also took him along as he shifted to the Nirmala *dera* called the Dera Khuhanwala, at Bhai Rupa in Bathinda district. The *mahant* made his pupil proficient in the study of *Gurbani* as well as in Sanskrit and *Vedic* thought. His expertise made his mentor, Mahna Singh, not only confer the title of Narotam (man *par excellence*) on him but also appoint him as his successor in the *dera* at Bhai Rupa where he breathed his last in 1924 CE.[25]

Deva Singh undertook to make an exegesis of the complete Sikh Scripture. It cannot be said with certainty if he succeeded in this venture, but the manuscript now preserved in a private collection at Ludhiana is in incomplete form, and has since remained unpublished. The only work of Deva Singh that saw the light of day is *Sidh Gost Satik*, which was published in 1898 CE.

Some Select Nirmala Works

The Nirmalas, no doubt, enjoy a place of prominence in the world of scholarship, especially Sikh studies, *Vedic* studies and ancient Indian religious lore. The literature produced by them can broadly be divided into two categories, Indian religious thought and Sikh scripture and thought. Their books were written in Sanskrit, Hindi, Sadh Bhakha and more recently in Punjabi. Of course, most of these are found written in Gurmukhi script. Since these Nirmalas dwelt at places which were known centres of Hindu and Sanskrit learning, they also wrote some books on Sanskrit language and grammar, Indian Philosophy, ancient Indian religious literature and thought. These books did not help them in their primary task of spreading the Sikh faith, but such an attempt on their part was perhaps necessary to prove their scholarly credentials to their counterparts amongst the Hindus, and they did so with considerable success. It is not possible for reasons of space to list, much less discuss, all the Nirmala works.[26] We shall, therefore, restrict ourselves to listing only the more significant of Nirmala works, especially those falling in the field of Sikh studies.

Their contribution to Sikh studies includes works on history of Sikh religion and tradition, and of the Nirmalas and exegesis. Mahant Ganesha Singh's *Nirmal Bhushan arthat Itihas Nirmal Bhékh*, Giani Gian Singh's *Nirmal Panth Pradipaka*, Mahant Dyal

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Singh's *Baba Nanak ji da Nirmal Panth*, and Hari Singh's *Nirmal Bhékh da Itihas até Sampardai Bansawali* are among the major full-length studies of the sect made by the Nirmala scholars. All of these have since been published in book-form and give us very useful information about the origin and spread of Nirmalas, their important centres, their missionary and literary activities, and so on. There are also a few books dealing with the Nirmala thought and way of life. Mahant Dyal Singh's *Nirmal Panth Darshan* is representative of this category. Bhai Santokh Singh's *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, and Giani Gian Singh's *Sri Gur Panth Parkash* and *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* are among the first detailed chronicles which take up the entire Sikh history as their subject-matter. A historian may find several flaws and drawbacks in these works, but they enjoy an important place in Sikh hagiographical literature.

However, the major contribution of Nirmalas is to the exegetical literature, though they "try to understand and elucidate the Sikh thought from the *Vedic* perspective."[27] Many among them wrote *tikas* of certain selected *banis*. Some of them prepared *prayayas* and *koshas* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The *prayays* by Lal Singh Narotam, Sham Singh and Deva Singh Virakt, and the *koshas* by Gurmukh Singh Nirmala (*Sri Guru Granth Kosh Samet Bani Beora*) and Tara Singh Narotam (*Granth Guru Girarath Kosh*) and the *tikas* by Giani Badan Singh (*Faridkoti Tika*) and Giani Gian Singh (*Garab Ganjani Tika*) are among the more important ones. Perhaps the only *prayaya* of the *Dasam Granth* has also been a Nirmala work, by Bakhshish Singh. Works on different concepts of Sikhism, *tikas* of individual *banis* and translations of Sanskrit classics are numerous.

Present and Future of the Nirmalas

No doubt, the Nirmalas have been a very important branch of the Sikh tradition. To begin with they functioned within the ambit of Sikh way of life, and they used to initiate people into the Khalsa fold. They took the initiation of the double-edged sword, and inspired and encouraged others to do so. Earlier they were strict celibates, but many of them have since married and taken to householder's life. Like all Khalsa, they were teetotallers but in addition strictly avoided non-vegetarian food. Most of the Nirmalas still follow this practice. In olden times they wore white robes, but with the passage of time and perhaps under the influence of some Hindu ascetic orders, some of them have begun donning ochre robes. The wandering Nirmalas are today difficult to distinguish from any Hindu ascetics. They roam about throughout the year except for the *chaturmas*, the traditional four months (*chaumasa*) of rainy season, when they halt at one place on specific request of a devotee. During these four months also, they hold daily discourses to preach the Gurus' word. They wear ochre-coloured dress.[28] They keep no money on their person and take up no vocation for livelihood, they solely depend on donations or the properties attached to their *deras*. They touch each other's feet as they meet to express their reverence for the other. Addition of *gotra* (sub-caste) to the name is taboo, all Nirmala converts are simply Nirmalas, completely free from the web of caste system. They have full faith in the ten Gurus and Sri Guru Granth

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Sahib, and function within the Sikh mainstream.

At present, the Nirmalas seem to be divided among those belonging to the *deras* affiliated with the Nirmal Panchayati Akhara and those out of its purview. The former have a certain sense of commitment and relationship with their rich heritage. One of them, Mahant Ganesha Singh, had appointed a committee, Nirmal Maha Mandal, with the primary aim of advising the *mahant* to take measures required for the betterment of the Nirmala tradition in the changed circumstances, but nothing significant has so far come out of it. In fact, such voices like that of Mahant Ganesha Singh get lost in the din and noise of the clamour to claim the *dera* properties as their own. Several of the Nirmalas have got married and turned their *deras* into personal citadels. The kind of scholarship they acquire from their tradition fails to come to terms with the modern-day needs. The Nirmalas have a rich heritage, sufficient material resources and the desire (at least on the part of some of them), but somehow they fail to put all these together in a chain. Let us hope some day someone of their ilk will have the will, the inclination and the potential to make use of the resources available to them for the revival and resurgence of their rich heritage so as to help the *Sampardai* work again for a bright future of the Sikhs and Sikhism.

— *D.S.*

Notes and References

1. Nabha, Bhai Kahn Singh : *Mahan Kosh*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala.
2. There is a third view also, but there are very few takers of this story amongst learned historians. According to this view, the origin of this tradition can be traced back to one Bir Singh whom the Guru is said to have once gifted his robes. It is said that the Guru wore this dress when a woman behaved with the Guru in an unbecoming manner. According to this belief, the Guru also blessed Bhai Bir Singh to be the originator and mentor of a new tradition. This story has been discredited and, therefore, is no longer taken into account as regards the origin of the Nirmalas. For details of this story, see Gian Singh, Giani : *Nirmal Panth Pardipaka*, pp. 45-47.
3. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Sri Raag*, p. 57.
   ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਊਜਲੇ ਜੋ ਰਾਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਇ ॥
   Sri Raag, p. 27.
   ਸਬਦਿ ਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਨਿਰਮਲੇ ਹਉ ਸਦ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੈ ਜਾਸੁ ॥
   Swaiyyé Sri Mukh Baak Mahla 5, p. 1409.
   ਨਿਰਮਲ ਭੇਖ ਅਪਾਰ ਤਾਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥
4. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 1:45.
   ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਯਾ ।
5. Jasbir Singh, Rai : *Nirmal Bhékh da Arambh* in Pritam Singh edited *Nirmal Sampardai*, p. 32.
6. It is supported by the Nirmala scholars as well. For examples see *Nirmal Panth Pardipaka*, p. 23.
7. Padam, Piara Singh : *Guru Gobind Singh Ji dé Darbari Ratan*, p. 259.
8. They are said to have been back by the *Vaisakhi* of 1699 CE when the Guru consecrated the Khalsa. They are also said to have taken *amrit* on that day. See *Nirmal Panth Pardipaka*, p. 23.
9. Hari Singh, Mahant : *Itihas Nirmal Bhékh*, pp. 73-74.
10. Sadhu Gulab Singh (*Adhyatam Ramayan*, p. 590) and Giani Gian Singh (*Nirmal Panth Pardipaka*, pp. 16-17) use this in support of their contention that among the followers of the Gurus those

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who lived a householder's life and were warriors were called Sikhs and those who took to celibacy and were given to scholarship came to be called the Nirmalas.

11. Nanda, Balbir Singh : *Puratan Sikh Sampardai*, p. 85.
12. Viyogi, Balbir Singh : "*Sri Nirmal Panchayati Akharé da Sirjan té Udésh*", in Pritam Singh edited *Nirmal Sampardai*, p. 43.
13. There is a controversy about the authentic text of the *Dastur-ul-Amal*. One such text with nine clauses is available at Kankhal. Bhai Kahn Singh in his *Mahan Kosh* refers to another text with thirty clauses. However, the former is generally accepted. The *Dastur-ul-Amal* also remained the subject of controversy when Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha questioned the Nirmalas for not following the Khalsa *rahit*.
14. Viyogi, Balbir Singh : op. cit., p. 45.
15. *Mahant* Mahitab Singh told, as says the prologue of the *Dastur-ul-Amal*, the Maharaja of Patiala that some concrete provisions be made so that the *langar* at Hardwar, Prayag and such other places is arranged at the time of *Kumbh* festivals. The Phulkian chiefs responded favourably. They made liberal donations and with a view to ensuring the future prosperity of the sect and smooth functioning of the office of the *mahant*, such a document was prepared.
16. For details of the 9 clauses of the *Dastur-ul-Amal*, see *Nirmal Sampardai*, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
17. Kesari, Gurdip Singh : "*Sri Guru Nanak Dev Darshan até Sikh Dharam nu Bahupakhi Dén*" in *Nirmal Sampardai*, op. cit., pp. 124-25.
18. Taran Singh : *Gurbani dian Viakhia Parnalian*, p. 138.
19. For details see, Kesari, Gurdip Singh : op. cit., pp. 126-27.
20. Ashok, Shamsher Singh : *Punjab dian Lahiran*, p. 88.
21. Dayal Singh, Mahant : *Nirmal Panth Darshan*, pp. 402-03.
22. Diwana, Mohan Singh : *A History of Punjabi Literature*, p. 901.
23. Harbans Singh (ed.) : *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*; for more details of Tara Singh's life, see also Shergill, Surinder Singh : *Pandit Tara Singh Narotam — Jiwan té Rachna*.
24. *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*.
25. Ibid.
26. A complete list of Nirmala works including manuscripts and printed editions is available in the form of bibliography attached at the end of the *Nirmal Sampardai*, op. cit., pp. 546-565.
27. Dharam Singh : *Sikhism — Norm and Form*, p. 57.
28. Ganesh Singh, Mahant : *Nirmal Bhushan Arthat Itihas Nirmal Bhékh*, p. 155.

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THE NIHANGS

Nomenclature

Etymologically speaking, *Mahan Kosh* traces the roots of the word to i) '*Nihang*' in Persian, which means : a) an alligator, b) a sword, c) a pen; ii) '*Nihshank*' in Sanskrit meaning one without fear of death; and iii) '*Nihsang*' in Sanskrit meaning an enlightened one, or one unattached to the material aspects of the world.

Giving the meaning of the word in Punjabi, Bhai Kahn Singh writes that '*Nihang*' means a Sikh who wears a dark blue knee-length close-necked shirt, a peaked turban festooned with quoits, *khanda*, and a *dumala* at the top, signifying the *Nishan Sahib* of the Sikhs, and ventures in this world, unattached to materialism, above the fear of death, always ready to embrace martyrdom in the battle for supremacy of *Hukam*.

Origin of Nihangs

It cannot be said with certainty how this sect came into being. There have been several different oral traditions prevalent at different times about its origin :

- One day while Sri Guru Gobind Singh was sitting in his *darbar* at Anandpur Sahib, Sahibzada Fateh Singh entered in a blue long robe and a peaked blue turban. The Guru liked the dress and said, "There will be a *Nihang Panth* of this attire."
- Sri Guru Gobind Singh was in disguise while he came out of the Mughal siege at Chamkaur Sahib. He was still in blue attire when he reached Dhilwan in the Malwa region. Baba Kaul Sahib is supposed to have requested the Guru to abandon the blue robes. The Guru accepted his request and asked him to light the fire. He tore the attire and threw the pieces one by one into the fire. He gave a piece of blue cloth to Bhai Man Singh who rolled it around his turban. It was the origin of the Nihang Sect.
- On *Vaisakhi* of 1699 CE, Sri Guru Gobind Singh chose the five beloved ones. When they were presented before the *sangat*, they were in blue dress. They became known as the Nihangs. According to Bhai Gurdas Singh, a

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contemporary poet, "thus were the *Singhs* created..... they wore blue dress".

- Nihangs were a sort of suicide squad of the Mughal army and wore blue uniform. The Sikhs took the name and uniform from the Mughals.[2]
- Some Akalis call themselves Nihangs meaning 'crocodile'. Their high-peaked turbans are said to have earned them this title from Sri Guru Gobind Singh, but the other version has it that during one of Zaman Shah's marauds they donned the high-peaked turbans of Turk soldiers so as to disguise themselves and then attack his forces at night and destroy them.[3]

Thus, Akali and *Nihang* were terms used synonymously.

These oral traditions are there, but one cannot say which one is true. Most accepted tradition amongst the Sikhs is that the Nihangs were those members of the Khalsa who opted to root out the enemy of *Hukam* without caring for their own lives. They were always on horseback carrying their weapons, fighting the anti-Sikh forces. They were always in the forefront of every battle during the lifetime of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, and they fought with this spirit even during the days when *Khalsa Raj* ruled supreme from Kandahar to Delhi.

Initiation Ceremony

While preparing *amrit*, Nihangs recite *Chandi Di Var* in addition to the prescribed five *banis*. Those who take *amrit*, are ordered to follow strictly the instructions dictated by the *jathedar*. In the *Nitnem* also they add *Chandi Di Var* and *Akal Ustat* to the prescribed regimen.

They always keep their weapons with them and pay a lot of respect to these weapons as destroyers of evil and protectors of good.

Daily Life of Nihangs

They are the Sikhs amongst whom some still carry the true Sikh stream. They have always been involved in the Sikh affairs in particular and worldly affairs in general, but without giving these precedence over the spiritual pursuits. Most of them marry and lead normal household lives whereas some of them remain unmarried. Most of the Nihangs stay in *deras*, where they till the attached land. The income thus earned is used for running the *langar*.

They always remain on the move from one place to another with their horses, other animals and paraphernalia. The place where they stay is commonly called *Chhauni* or a cantonment. *Langar* and preaching of *Gurbani* continue non-stop. In addition to the income from the land attached to the *deras*, contributions in cash and kind from the Sikhs and gurdwaras also play a part in their upkeep. They never beg or solicit these contributions, but accept only when they are voluntarily offered.

The Nihangs take part in all Sikh festivals in their own way. *Vaisakhi* and *Hola Mohalla* are the main festivals where Nihangs show their martial skills in the art of traditional warfare.

Like true Sikhs, they do not drink alcohol but many of them have started taking

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bhang (hemp), calling it *sukhnidhan* — treasure of bliss. This single fact shows that they have increasingly been deviating from the true path of *Sikhi* as no intoxicants are permitted in the Sikh religion. However, till 1849 CE, when the British occupied the *Khalsa Raj*, the Nihangs carried the purest strain of *Sikhi*. It is only sometime during the British occupation, most probably around the earlier half of the 20th century, that the deviations started creeping in. After 1947 CE, when the British handed over the reigns of power to the Congress party, the Nihangs increasingly had to negotiate with government officials in order to continue with some semblance of their traditional lifestyle.

We will be concentrating mainly on the period before these deviations crept in, in order to better understand some events in Sikh history.

Social Work

Nihangs were mainly fighters for protection of the basic rights of the common man, but they were social workers as well. Selfless service was the main aim of their lives. J.D. Cunningham in his book cites an example of selfless service by a *Nihang* :

> So strong is the feeling that a Sikh should work, or have an occupation, that one who abandons the world and is not of a warlike turn, will still employ himself in some way for the benefit of the community. Thus, the author once found an Akali repairing or rather making a road among precipitous ravines, from the plain of Satluj to the petty town of Kiratpur. He avoided intercourse with the world generally. He was highly esteemed by the people, who left food and clothing at particular places for him, and his earnest persevering character had made an evident impression on a Hindu shepherd boy, who had adopted part of the Akali dress, and spoke with awe of the devotee.[4]

Service in the Field of Preaching Sikhism

Nihangs during 18-19th century did a lot of service in the field of preaching of Sikh principles among the masses. The *bungas* or *deras* of Nihangs were main centres for the purpose. *Katha* and *kirtan* besides imparting training in *gatka* (Sikh martial art) were a part of the daily programme there. Sikh parents used to send their children to such *deras* for learning *Gurbani* and for training in other religious spheres. They also played a vital role in making Sikh literature popular, and most of the copies of Sri Guru Granth Sahib were prepared by the Nihangs during this period.

Peculiar Look of Nihangs

The Nihangs wore long blue robes, put on weapons, donned a peaked turban and rode a horse. All this gave them an uncommon look. But these points of distinction were not the reason behind the respect they enjoyed everywhere, as illustrated by this ditty of the 18th century :

> The Nihangs are here !
> Open the doors without any fear ![5]

This ditty used to be sung by the women-folk in the days when marauding armies

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from Afghanistan, first under Nadir Shah and then Abdali, were subjecting the areas up to Delhi and even beyond to extreme cruelties and only the Sikhs were daring enough to oppose them. According to Gordon :

> The Akalis, always dressed in the sacred blue garments, were heavily armed and in addition carried several thin sharp edged quoits (the ancient discus) round their turban, with which they cut down an enemy at short distances. They kept up the fighting spirit when affairs were not going well, and were the forlorn hope in many a fight.[6]

According to Latif, Nihangs wore "blue chequered clothes, put bangles of steel round their wrist and a circular, sharpened, bright sword round their head."[7]

They generally remained on the move from one place to another. They called this *Chalda Vaheer* ("the roaming battalion"). Tents, horses and other animals also accompanied the *Vaheer*. Wherever they camped, *Guru ka langar* was served to every passer-by.

They were thoroughly committed individuals, always ready to lay down their lives for the Sikh principles. Lepel Griffin, though anti-Sikh in outlook, gives the qualities of a *Nihang* / Akali as follows :

> The real Akali was bold, free, and unassuming to all, but in particular haughty and audacious to those who dared to call or think themselves his superiors in rank or station. He ever strove to win the character of a friend to the poor, and an enemy of the rich and powerful. He was a fanatic in his religion, which was nearly a pure deism, and followed strictly all the rules laid down for his guidance by the great Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He made no scruple to seize or demand from even a friend whatever he required; but he was equally ready to overpay an obligation. He cared little for wealth, but was content with the mere necessaries of existence. He was regardless of life and willingly exposed his own to danger at the call of duty. Such was the true Akali of the stock which produced a Phula Singh; but the race is now nearly extinct.[8]

According to John Malcolm :

> The Akalis have a great interest in maintaining both the religion and government of the Sikhs as established by Sri Guru Gobind Singh, as on its continuance in that shape, their religious and political influence must depend. Should Amritsar cease to be a place of resort, or be no longer considered as the religious capital of the state in which all questions that involve the general interest of the commonwealth, are to be decided, this formidable order would at once fall from that power and consideration, which they possess, to a level with other mendicants.[9]

In the words of Gordon :

> They exercised a fierce scrutiny as censors in upholding strict compliance with the militant creed of the Singhs, constituted themselves defenders of the faith against all innovations, took a prominent part in the councils in the planning and arranging of expeditions for averting national danger and in educating the people in the doctrines of the Sikh religion.[10]
>
> Through their extraordinary zeal and enthusiasm, they acquired the character of priests, in which capacity they acted effectively, while directing the conduct of the Sikh councils

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at the Akal Takht. They did not like the Europeans and the Muslims, because of their anti-Sikh practices. According to Malcolm, they were, 'insufferable to strangers for whom they entertain a contempt which they take little pains to conceal'.[11]

According to Dr Bhagat Singh :

> To serve a foreign master was against their creed. In fact, it was a practice with them to be a little uncharitable to the powerful and the rich, while serving and helping the poor and the weak. In the matter of religious doctrine and practice, they are uncompromisingly orthodox. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, the Akalis were an order that never cared about death and misery. The Akalis have, ever since their origin, been held in high esteem by the Sikhs. Their contingents were called the forces of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Therefore, they enjoyed the regard of the whole Sikh community. Hence the deep veneration in which the *Shahid* or *Nihang Misl* was held.[12]

Nihangs always live in high spirits (*charhdi kala*). In olden days they faced all odds in a cheerful mood. Suffering cruelties and atrocities of the enemy never affected their high spirits. When thousands of Sikhs were killed in the *Vadda Ghallughara* (the major holocaust) by Ahmad Shah Abdali, it was believed that it would not be possible for Sikhs to stand strong again. But when a person lamented the irreparable loss, a *Nihang* Singh laughed and said that the real Khalsa had survived and only the weak elements had perished. Such high spirits are a hallmark of the Nihangs.[13]

After the demise of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the entire Sikh community was engaged in the struggle for removal of the unjust government and establishment of the just rule of the common man, and the Nihangs were in the forefront of this struggle. During the leadership of Nawab Kapur Singh, *Dal Khalsa* was bifurcated into two groups, i.e., *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal.* Sikhs or Nihangs above 40 years were taken in the *Budha Dal*, and those below 40 years in the *Taruna Dal.* Their duties were also different. *Budha Dal* would preach the Sikh thought, look after and construct Sikh shrines and pay full attention to the safety and well-being of women and children, especially during a calamity. *Taruna Dal* would play defensive and offensive roles during the raids of the Mughal or Afghan armies. *Taruna Dal* was further sub-divided into the following five groups :

1. *Jatha* Shaheedan : Its *jathedar* was Baba Deep Singh Shaheed. His close associates were Baba Natha Singh and Baba Gurbakhsh Singh.
2. *Jatha* Amritsarian : Bhai Karam Singh and Dharam Singh of Amritsar were *jathedars* of this *jatha.*
3. *Jatha* of Baba Kahan Singh : The *jathedar* of this group of warriors was Baba Kahan Singh. His close associates were Bhai Miri Singh, Hari Singh and Bagh Singh Hallowalia.
4. *Jatha* Dallewalia : Its *jathedar* was Baba Dasaundha Singh of Kot Budhe Da.
5. *Jatha* Rangretian : Eminent leaders of this *jatha* were Baba Bir Singh, Jeeon Singh, Madan Singh, Amar Singh and others.[14]

In the course of time the number of these *jathas* increased to thirty, and these were further sub-divided into sixty five groups.

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The Nihangs led a life of tremendous hardship during the early 18th century, half-naked, almost always on horseback, eating very poor meals, weapons always dangling down their waist, and always ready to face the enemy with valour. They, however, always moved in high spirits. Giani Gian Singh has given a very vivid picture of the Akalis in his famous chronicle *Panth Parkash*.[15]

Code Language of Nihangs

Nihangs developed a code language so as to avoid detection of any message by the enemy as also to keep their spirits high. There are about 1000 words with different or hidden meanings. These words are ironical as well, thus suggestive of the high spirits of the Nihangs. Enemy could not understand the meaning of these terms. For example, a single *Nihang* would call himself "an army of one and a quarter *lakh*." Grams would be called almonds, cart – ship, donkey – police officer, goat – nymph, blind – brave soldier, etc. Bhai Kahn Singh in *Mahan Kosh* gives a list of some of these words, popularly called *Nihang Singhan dé Bolé*, that is, 'the terminology of *Nihang* Singhs'.

Service to Sikh Nation

Nihangs always made great sacrifices to keep the flag of true *Sikhi* flying high. They fought fearlessly against invaders and and for the supremacy of Sikh principles, right from the days of Sri Guru Gobind Singh to the establishment of *Khalsa Raj* and beyond. During the *misl* period they guarded the Sikh shrines, and resisted the tyranny of the enemy on common folk. The extent of their commitment to serving the cause is illustrated by the following episode :

A *jatha* of 30 Nihangs was guarding Darbar Sahib at Amritsar under Jathedar Baba Gurbakhsh Singh when on November 30, 1764 CE, Ahmad Shah Abdali reached there. He along with his army planned to destroy Darbar Sahib. The brave Nihangs fought for the sovereignty of the gurdwara and laid down their lives. This incident happened on December 1, 1764 CE. The saga of their bravery was recorded by Qazi Noor Mohammad in his famous work, *Jangnamah*.[16]

During the *misl* period, *Nihang misl*'s[17] service was completely selfless, as the leaders of this *misl* did not occupy any territory.

When the fratricidal wars started amongst the Sikh *misls*, the Nihangs remained neutral, refusing to raise their weapons against fellow Sikhs. But whenever and whereever any Sikh *misl* faced a non-Sikh enemy, the brave men of *Nihang misl* fought with unmatched valour, and helped keep the *Sikh Nishan Sahib* flying high. After the battle they would always go back to their camps and immerse themselves in their religious duties.

Role of Nihangs During Ranjit Singh's Rule

When Ranjit Singh became Maharaja of Punjab in 1799 CE, he pursuaded Akali Phula Singh to help him in the expansion of boundaries of the state in non-Sikh areas and to preach the Sikh principles. Akali Phula Singh was a very powerful personality of

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those days. He had a large number of followers and friends. His *jatha* throughout retained the irregular army character of the Khalsa, even when Maharaja Ranjit Singh was keenly training the other *jathas* of the Khalsa armies on the European regimental pattern. The number of the members of the Nihang's *misl* varied from time to time. The leader of the Nihangs, Akali Phula Singh, was against any pact of the Khalsa with the British and he disapproved of the training imparted by the European generals to the Khalsa armies. In spite of all these differences, the Nihangs took part in several expeditions of Ranjit Singh, and their role was highly laudable. Victory was, generally, due to these fearless Nihangs. During Ranjit Singh's lifetime very challenging battles of Multan, Peshawar, Kashmir, battles with Pathans, etc., were fought and won because of the role played by the Nihangs led by Akali Phula Singh. It is recorded that the enemy dreaded the very sight of the Nihangs.[18]

Nihangs and the English

The views of most of the European, Muslim and pro-English writers about Nihangs are not very positive because of the sustained opposition that the Nihangs offered to their expansionist designs. Their comments are completely biased. For example, Griffin writes :

> ...Though little better than drunken savages, they were supposed by the Sikhs to possess a semi-sacred character, and were moreover, useful when desperate deeds were to be done which the rank and file of army might have declined... ... They were identical in character and in manner of their onslaught with the *ghazis* of Afghanistan and the Sondam, whose fierce and terrible attack shakes the nerves of all but the steadiest and most seasoned troops... ...[19]

Another pro-British Hindu writer writes :

> At Hari a select band of Ranjit Singh's cavalry is stationed to protect the villagers against the Akalis and Nihangs. These violent and ignorant men do not fear Ranjit Singh, who has often to run the risk of his life from these bigoted people... ...Nihangs are careless of their own lives and consequently of those of others.[20]

The bias is obvious when we recall the ditty, quoted earlier, which was current amongst the local non-Sikh population of Punjab which talks about vanishing of fear at the sight of the Nihangs. If the Nihangs had been harassing the villagers, this bit of folklore would not have developed. Similar biased views have been expressed by Muhammad Latif in his *History of Punjab*, Steinback in his *The Punjab*, etc.

Obviously, it is easy to concoct "history" but impossible to fabricate folklore. G.S. Chhabra refutes the misleading statements like the ones cited above. He says :

> But all these writers seem to have failed in understanding the real character of Akalis,..... yet they, among the Sikhs, were the moralists, who kept the faith of the Khalsa alive during the darkest periods of its history. Wherever these Akalis fought, they fought less for a material gain or worldly honour and more for a cause; but for them, it would have been more difficult for Sikhs to give a death blow to the Mughals in the Punjab and to send the Durranis back weeping aloud for their failure to establish

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> their rule in this [region]. Under Ranjit Singh, too, Akalis won for the Maharaja many a difficult battle, and thus paved the way for the unification of the Punjab.[21]

The Nihangs were against the British imperialism. There may be many reasons for it but the main reason was that they suspected their intentions and believed that the British had a hidden agenda to capture Punjab by hook or crook.

The Nihangs were always opposed to any agreement between the English and *Sarkar-é-Khalsa*, but Maharaja Ranjit Singh was in favour of keeping peace with them. Moreover, the Nihangs were always a threat to the life of the English high-ups. Whenever any dignitary visited Punjab, the Maharaja had to make elaborate security arrangements for the visitors.

When Metcalfe was negotiating with Ranjit Singh the boundaries of *Khalsa Raj*, there was a scuffle between Nihangs and Metcalfe's Shia guards. Khushwant Singh, writing about this incident, says :

> The negotiations of the preceding six months had produced such a state of tension that a small fracas between Phula Singh's Nihangs and Metcalfe's Muslim escort almost set light to the powder magazine. Fortunately, before news of the incident could reach Calcutta, the governor general had despatched drafts of treaties to be offered to the *durbar*. The catastrophe of war was thus averted in the nick of time.[22]

It is clear that Nihangs or Akalis never approved of the dealings of the Maharaja with the English. There is a recorded incident where a Nihang tried to kill the Maharaja, but was overpowered by his bodyguards. Sohan Lal Suri, a contemporary Hindu writer, narrates this in the following words :

> Out of adversity of his days and evil character one Akali (*Nihang*) drew his sword out of its sheath and rushed towards the Maharaja. The orderlies and state servants gathered together on the spot, held the Akali in the clutches of interferences and restraint and brought him before the Maharaja.[23]

While the *misl* Sardars were fighting amongst themselves for control of more and more territory, the Nihangs kept themselves uninvolved in these internecine wars. Because of the partisan nature of these fratricidal wars, and the wish of the *misl* Sardars to control a part of the city of Amritsar, the Nihangs sought to keep the Panthic institutions like the Darbar Sahib and Akal Takht above any partisan control. Nihangs thus became custodians of Akal Takht and Darbar Sahib by virtue of their remaining true to the Sikh principles. And it was because of this very reason that no partisan group amongst the Sikhs tried to take control of the Akal Takht from them. It was only after the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849 CE that they were forced to leave Akal Takht. The British used armed forces to accomplish their mission and many Nihangs were killed by the British forces during this operation. According to Dr Madanjit Kaur :

> [The] control of the Akal Takht was taken over by the *Budha Dal* (the old guard). A few *Nihang Singhs* were put in charge of worship there. They looked to other services at the Akal Takht too. The arrangements for the management of the Akal Takht made by the *misls* continued till the first Anglo-Sikh War (1845 CE), whereafter the

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> Akal Bunga passed under the control of British authorities along with the [gurdwara]. The remarkable achievements of the management under the *misls* were the construction of the present building complex of the [gurdwara] and the tremendous increase in its income.[24]

Akali Phula Singh *Nihang* was a very powerful *jathedar*, who did not hesitate to punish even Maharaja Ranjit Singh for his religious misconduct.

British Rule and Nihangs

After the annexation of Punjab in 1849 CE, the English were very fearful of, hence hostile towards, the Nihangs because of their free spirits and uncompromising nature and as a result sought to eliminate them completely. Scores of them were killed in skirmishes with the British forces. Evetually, the British government forced the Nihangs out of Darbar Sahib and made it over to some of their own loyalists.

With the passing of time Nihangs grew quite weak as a force mainly due to depleting ranks under severe persecution by the British. Their main leaders like Bhai Maharaj Singh, etc., were either killed or exiled to far away places like Singapore and Burma. The majority of the Nihangs removed themselves from trying to give direction to the Sikh affairs, and retired to their *bungas* and *deras* refusing once again to pick their weapons against fellow Sikhs who were helping the British to consolidate their position in Punjab. As such they no more posed any threat to the British government and were thus left to live as they wished within their own *deras* and *bungas*. They, however, were still getting grants from Sikh *Sardars* as also offerings from Sikhs of areas nearby. The British employed scores of informers to keep a close watch on the activities of the Nihangs, always apprehensive that the volatile Nihangs may not start another war against them.

Nihangs' Role in Sikh Affairs after the Annexation of Punjab

In order to describe the role of the Nihangs after the annexation of Punjab, we have to keep in mind that the words *Nihang* and Akali were used synonymously till the formation of a political party called *Akali Dal* in 1920 CE, which was to safeguard the political interests of the Sikhs. Thus, till about the first quarter of the 20th century, the following definition held true for both political Akalis as well as *dera* Nihangs :

> An Akali is a true Sikh of *Dashmesh*. He worships none, except God. He is a selfless sentinel of gurdwaras and is ever-ready to fight fervently for his religion. Begging is a disgrace for him, so he earns by the sweat of his brow. In the face of predicament, he accepts it as the will of God. He is unique, yet affable to all. Like a lotus in a pond, he is above the material involvments.[25]

All those who were involved in the Sikh struggles after the annexation of Punjab by the British, and came true to this definition of Akali and the unique trait of putting the sanctity of Sikh principles above one's life, were the heirs of the Nihangs who were once led by towering personalities like Baba Deep Singh Shaheed and Akali Phula Singh.

We also have to keep in mind that a *Nihang* is not a hereditary title. It is an epithet

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which describes the above cited character traits of a person by virtue of which he / she becomes known as a *Nihang*.

From 1849 CE to 1947 CE, Sikhs played very significant role in the history of Punjab, and many movements like the Singh Sabha movement, Gurdwara Reform movement, Independence movement, Babbar Akali movement, Ghadr movement, etc., were started by them. In all these movements, all the involved persons, whether leaders or otherwise, fitting the above definition, maybe called Nihangs or Akalis. An excerpt describing actions of an unnamed "Nihang" may be cited :

> The first serious conflict between the [British] Government and the Sikhs occured in connection with the demolition of the outer wall of the Rikab Ganj gurdwara at Delhi. The Government desired to use a portion of the gurdwara land for its own requirements in New Delhi, and the Sikhs resented the encroachment... ... The Government ... ... drunk with the pride of power ... ... did not care for the feelings of the Sikhs ... ... for the first time in the history of the Punjab after the British occupation a bitter agitation arose amongst the Sikh masses ... ... The Government was approached to give up the land it had occupied and allow the Sikhs to rebuild the wall that was pulled down ... ... Government was afraid of losing its prestige ... ... [The Sikhs then] decided to organise a *Shahidi Jatha*, a band of martyrs, which should go to Delhi and build at all cost the demolished wall there in defiance of the Government orders. If necessary they were required to lay their lives in the attempt to restore the sacred wall to its former position.[26]

From 1947 CE onwards, the true Nihangs have remained virtually silent onlookers of Sikh struggles. We must take care not to identify the present-day '*Budha Dal*' and '*Taruna Dal*' as well as the present-day 'Akalis' with the Akalis / Nihangs of the historical reference. A majority of the present-day 'Nihangs' are no more than parasites, a group pretending to be the heirs to the legacy of the legendary Sikh warriors but actually given to intoxication and other such practices which are completely antithetical to Sikh principles. As to the 'Akalis' of today, they are mere politicians and have no connection with the Akalis hallowed in Sikh history.

Some Eminent Nihangs

BABA BINOD SINGH

He was an eminent *Nihang* leader and a brave warrior who fought all battles under the command of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. After the latter's death, Baba Binod Singh commanded the Khalsa and laid down his life for the Sikh cause at Sialkot, where his *dera* was a place of pilgrimage before partition in 1947 CE.

BABA DARBARA SINGH

He was son of Bhai Nanu Singh, martyr in the battle of Chamkaur Sahib in 1705 CE. At the age of 12, he came to Anandpur Sahib to serve the Guru. He remained custodian of the Akal Takht for about 10 years. He died at the ripe old age of 90. Nawab Kapur Singh was his successor.

NAWAB KAPUR SINGH

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He was a great Sikh and fearless fighter. He was born in 1697 CE. His father's name was Dalip Singh, resident of Kaloké village in Sheikhupura district (now in Pakistan). He was initiated into the Sikh fold by Bhai Mani Singh along with his father and brother. He entered the *jatha* of Bhai Darbara Singh, captured Faizalpur in 1733 CE, and renamed it Singhpura. He was a respected and accepted leader of the *Dal Khalsa*. He divided *Dal Khalsa* into two groups. Sikhs above the age of 40 years were kept in *Budha Dal* and those below that in the *Taruna Dal*. He also remained custodian of Akal Takht for some time. He guided the Khalsa Panth for about two decades. He died in 1753 CE at Amritsar.[27]

BABA AGHAR SINGH

He was nephew of Bhai Mani Singh Shahid. Born in October 1719 CE in village Tutomajar, district Hoshiarpur, to Bhai Nigahia Singh and Ram Kaur, he was physically a strong and very brave man. He studied *Gurbani* from Bhai Man Singh, a great Sikh scholar and martyr. Moman Khan was a sworn enemy of the Khalsa. Nawab Kapur Singh asked the Khalsa to eliminate him. Baba Aghar Singh volunteered to do this job. He approached Moman Khan in disguise, and with one sudden stroke of the sword, delivered with immense power, cut off his head and took it to Nawab Kapur Singh. It was in 1755 CE. This incident made him a household name in Punjab. He died in the battle of Sirhind in 1764 CE.

BABA NAINA SINGH

He was a much respected person amongst the Sikhs of 18th century. The tradition of sporting a *dumala* by the Nihangs is traced back to him. He was one of the *jathedars* of the Shaheed *misl*. He brought up Akali Phula Singh as he was a close friend of his father. Akali Phula Singh's father had died when Phula Singh was just a child. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, in his *Mahan Kosh*, refers to him as "a jewel of *misl Shaheedan*". Not much detail of his life is available.

AKALI PHULA SINGH

He was son of Bhai Ishar Singh and was born in 1761 CE in the village Seeha in the Bangar area. His father died when he was still a child. He took *amrit* from Baba Naina Singh of *Misl Shaheedan*. He made Amritsar his headquarters, but roamed all over the Punjab for the cause of the Khalsa. Though he did not approve of the personal conduct of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, yet he always stood by him in the wars between the Khalsa and the non-Sikhs. He laid down his life for the *Khalsa Raj* when he was killed in Battle of Naushehra on March 14, 1823 CE. He remained the custodian of the Akal Takht, and did not hesitate to punish even Ranjit Singh for his misconduct. Akali Phula Singh was a great general and even greater warrior.[28]

BABA HANUMAN SINGH

He was born in 1756 CE in village Naurang Singh Wala in distt. Ferozepur. He fought against the English in the first Anglo-Sikh War in 1845-46 CE along with a large number of his followers. When after the war he reached Patiala, pro-British army of Patiala state made a severe attack on the *Nihang* army. About 1500 Nihangs were killed. He escaped with about 500 men, but got killed near Sohana-Kumbhra in 1846 CE with

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all his men. He remained *jathedar* of *Budha Dal* for about 12 years. He was also custodian of the Akal Takht for quite a long time.

BABA PRAHLADA SINGH

Son of Bhai Jagat Singh and Bishan Kaur, he was *jathedar* of *Budha Dal* and custodian of the Akal Takht. Baba Prahlada Singh went to Nanded to escape British persecution, but was killed by Baba Ala Singh, Head Priest.

BABA TEJA SINGH

He was born in 1839 CE, the son of Bhai Khazan Singh and Bibi Suggo of Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan). He became *jathedar* of *Budha Dal* in 1907 CE and remained *jathedar* up to his death in 1929 CE. He was a very good *kirtania* also.

AKALI KAUR SINGH NIHANG

A rare scholar of Sikh scripture and man of letters, Akali Kaur Singh was born in 1886 CE. His parents were Bhai Mahan Singh and Mai Karam Kaur of Paddai, a small village near Chakkar now in the Pakistan occupied part of Kashmir. In 1906 CE, he became a *Nihang*. He toured throughout India propagating the Sikh faith. In 1920 CE, he established Guru Nanak Ashram in Chakkar. He played a very important role during India's partition to rescue the Sikhs. He died at Patiala on January 23, 1953 CE. He has written the following books : *Gurshabad Ratan Prakash*, *Tuk Tatkara of Kabbits and Varan of Bhai Gurdas*, *Istri Sankat Mochan*, *Hazoori Sathi*, *Rasoee Sikhiya*, *Sukhsagar*, *Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji da Dakkan Parvesh*, *Gutka Pramanic Nitnem*, *Sri Gur Sobha* (Ed.), etc.[29]

BABA CHET SINGH

He was born in 1914 CE at Talwandi Sabo. His parents were Bhai Gurdit Singh and Pardhan Kaur. He was *jathedar* of Budha Dal up to his death in 1968 CE. He was well versed in Sikh scriptures and was an outstanding horseman. He was master in traditional Sikh martial art

BABA SHAMSHER SINGH NIHANG

He was son of Bhai Mehtab Singh and Bibi Chand Kaur of Raikot in Ludhiana, born in 1861 CE. He was a religious-minded child. He joined *Budha Dal*, when he was a small child. He left his village for pilgrimage of Hazoor Sahib. He served the Nawab of Hyderabad for a long time, and received appreciation for his services. The Gurdwara Management conferred the title '*Daroga*' to the *Nihang*. He started construction of Gurdwara Gurusar at Sidhar on his return to Raikot. A beautiful and vast building of the gurdwara speaks of the service of this *gursikh*. He also served the society by establishing educational institutions at Sidhar. He died on March 26, 1930 CE.[30]

— *G.S.*

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    ਕਰਕੇ ਕਮਾਈ ਖਾਵੇ ਮੰਗਣਾ ਹਰਾਮ ਜਾਣੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਪਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨੇ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ ਹੈ ।
    ਸ੍ਵਾਰਥ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਚੌਕੀਦਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਜੰਗ ਲਈ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਮੁਖ ਲਾਲੀ ਹੈ ।
    ਪੂਜੇ ਨਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਸ਼ਮੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਏ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਹੈ ।
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SEWAPANTHIS

Nomenclature

Sewapanth literally stands for the *panth* of *sewa*, i.e., path of service. Tradition of selfless service is very old in India. Sikhism lays a lot of emphasis on *sewa*. History of Sikh religion and tradition is a saga of continuous struggle in the cause of righteousness. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur performed a unique feat when he laid down his life for the sake of righteousness (*dharam*). The martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev and the sacrifices made by Sri Guru Gobind Singh and innumerable Sikhs need also to be viewed from this perspective.

Among the devotees of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was one Bhai Kahnaiya who had served the Guru for quite some time, and after his martyrdom continued to serve his son and successor, Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He served the Guru and the Sikhs alike. He would even offer water to the injured soldiers of the Imperial Mughal army, which had then besieged the fort of Anandpur Sahib. He made no distinction between friend and foe, serving all alike. He is said to have founded the sect known as Sewapanth. His selfless service became the ideal for his followers, who vied with one another to serve the suffering mankind.

According to another tradition, this missionary order acquired its name from Bhai Sewa Ram, a great saint under whose leadership it developed rapidly. This could be true, since this order is also called *Sewapanthi Addan Shahi Sampardai*. It is clear from the old writings of this order that Bhai Sewa Ram was a great saint. His area of preaching of Sikhism and service to mankind was western Punjab, particularly Noorpur Thal, Bhera, Miani, Bhakhar, etc. Bhai Addan Shah was also a great saint. He preached *Gurmat* in Lahore area. He was himself engaged in the service of mankind, and encouraged other saints and devotees of his age to serve humanity as well as preach the Sikh religion to the masses and to write treatise on religious and ethical subjects and biographies of saints. He also got translated *Kimia-i-Saadat*, *Masanavi* of Maulana Rumi, *Yog Visheshata*, etc. Because of the high stature and immense popularity of these two saints, this order also became popular as *Sewapanthi Addan Shahi Sampardai*. Whatever

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the reason for this missionary order getting named as Sewapanth, it remains a fact that this order is fully devoted to *sewa* of those coming to their *dera* and of mankind in general.

Origin of the Missionary Order

BHAI KAHNAIYA

It is generally believed that the Sewapanth originated with Bhai Kahnaiya, though some people associate it with Bhai Sewa Ram. It did not begin as a schismatic group like the Minas or Ramraiyé. The Sewapanthis were true Sikhs with unflinching faith in the Gurus. However, some peculiar features of the group turned them into a distinct missionary order. Their stress on service, more precisely the service of others, gave them this nomenclature. Their emphasis on non-violence went to the extreme, so that they did not consider it necessary to take *amrit* of the double-edged sword to begin with, because they did not want to wear swords which is mandatory for an *amritdhari* Sikh. The Sewapanthi saints remained celibates, and with the passage of time they developed a special aversion for womankind, which is against the Sikh tenets. However, all this has since changed. The Sewapanthi saints now accept the Khalsa initiatory rites and they respect womankind like other Sikhs.

Bhai Kahnaiya, and after him many other saints, made their contribution to the transformation of their small group into a significant missionary order. Numerically they may be a small minority, but their contribution to the spread of the Sikh faith and Sikh literature deserves attention. We shall take up for analysis in the following pages the brief life-sketches and the contribution made by some eminent Sewapanthi saints.

The founder of the sect, Bhai Kahnaiya (1648-1718 CE), was a Sikh during the time of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. As and when he got a chance to stay with the Guru, he always served in the stable. After the martyrdom of the Guru, he devoted himself to Sri Guru Gobind Singh and stayed at Anandpur Sahib for a long time during the latter's stay there. Sri Guru Gobind Singh later deputed him to go to western India to preach *Gurbani* and serve the common man.

Bhai Kahnaiya was born at village Sodhra in Gujranwala district (now in Pakistan) in 1648 CE. His father's name was Nathu Ram, who was a civil supplier to the Mughal army and was known to be quite well-off in the region. Bhai Kahnaiya was given traditional education, but he did not take much interest in family affairs. He would go to *sadhus* and saints and listen to their discourses in search of spiritual solace. He became a disciple of Bhagat Nanuan, who was a renowned *Bairagi* saint. On the death of Nanuan Bairagi, Bhai Kahnaiya became very sad and lonely. He returned home in a mood of dejection and desperation. Around that time his father too died. As he was the eldest in the family, the family business of military supply naturally came under his charge. However, he did not pay much attention to it, as his mission was altogether different. One day, while he was on the way to the Mughal forces, he heard a Sikh recite hymns of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, which touched him deeply. He left the camp, and as he was roaming in the jungle, a saint met him and asked him to go to a

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town and meet a *sadhu* whose name was Sant Bans. The *sadhu* advised him to go to Anandpur Sahib and seek the blessings of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. Bhai Kahnaiya followed his advice and reached Anandpur Sahib and started serving in the Guru's stable.

In 1704 CE, the imperial Mughal army invaded Anandpur Sahib and surrounded the fort and cut the supply lines to force the Guru to surrender. During the siege, hand to hand fight was a common feature. Bhai Kahnaiya, who was serving the Guru at Anandpur Sahib in those days, served water to the wounded soldiers of both sides. Some Sikhs complained against him. When the Guru asked him to explain his position, his answer was that he did not see any Mughals, Hindus, or Sikhs but only the face of the Guru in everybody. This answer pleased the Guru immensely, and he gave him ointment also to apply on the wounds of the injured. The Guru said to the other Sikhs that only Bhai Kahnaiya had understood his teachings correctly.

After the evacuation of Anandpur Sahib, he also left Anandpur Sahib and reached Kawa and established a *dharamsal* there. The preaching of *Gurbani* and *kirtan* was the daily routine, and *Guru ka langar* was for all visitors and wayfarers. Boarding and lodging were free for all. This generosity impressed the local populace, and many of them adopted Sikhism, and their way of life was completely changed.

In some old books Bhai Kahnaiya is shown as an Udasi *sadhu* but this is not correct. He never was an Udasi. The word *Udasi* is used in the wider sense of a detached person or an ascetic.

For the remaining years of his life, Bhai Kahnaiya remained in western Punjab and preached *Gurmat* and served humanity with deep love for the common man. He died at the age of 70 years.

BHAI SEWA RAM

Bhai Kahnaiya's most loving disciple was Bhai Sewa Ram. His father was a saintly person and had educated him for higher values and spiritual pursuits. At the age of twelve, he left home in search of a guru or guide and eventually found him in Bhai Kahnaiya.

After a long journey, Sewa Ram reached Sodhra where Bhai *ji* was preaching the Guru's creed. One day Bhai Sewa Ram was relaxing in a garden. A thug, who had cheated some people of their silverware, accused Sewa Ram of the theft. Bhai Sewa Ram was taken to the *jagirdar* of the village and chained. Bhai Kahnaiya looked at him, saw his innocence, and got him released. Thereafter, Sewa Ram became a devoted disciple of Bhai Kahnaiya and served him and the people in general with full zest. For the purpose of preaching *Gurmat*, he visited Noorpur Thal. When he came to know of the problem of scarcity of water in the area, he dug a well. He also got constructed a *dharamsal* for the way-farers and travellers where he provided free boarding and lodging.

Bhai Sewa Ram became a known holy man in the area. Local masses attended the congregations and heard his discourses. One of them was a young boy Sehja. He confided to Bhai *ji* that he found worldly passions so disturbing even in his tender age, and asked him what would happen when he grew to full youthhood. Bhai *ji* told him

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that in the Sikh way of life one should channelise the energies into noble and altruistic pursuits. This Sehja later on became Sehaj Ram, a great saint and writer who is known as Ved Vyas of Sewapanth. Another important person who came in contact with Bhai Sewa Ram was Bhai Addan Shah, a scholar and saint of high repute. In 1728 CE, Bhai Sewa Ram breathed his last at Jammu. His prominent disciples were Bhai Addan Shah, Bhai Lachhman, Bhai Badhan, Bhai Rana, Bhai Santokha, Bhai Narain, Bhai Sehaj Ram and Bhai Sahib Ram.

BHAI ADDAN SHAH

Bhai Addan Shah succeeded Bhai Sewa Ram and continued the pursuits of his predecessor. He was born in 1680 CE at village Lau near Shah Jiwana. In childhood he learnt Gurmukhi from Bhai Gurdas Dakhani who was a disciple of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and preached Sikhism, Gurmukhi script and Punjabi language in the area as desired by the Guru.

Bhai Addan Shah established *dharamsals* at Lau, Munda Shreeh and Shah Jiwana, which became known centres of Sikh studies. The *deras* or *dharamsals* were a refuge for tired travellers and needy persons, where free boarding and lodging were available to all. Bhai *ji* was very large hearted and always kind to all, even to thieves and criminals.

The Mughal soldiers were very hot-headed, because they could do whatever they wished unchecked. One such rogue one day dragged a *sadhu* when he was meditating. This unpleasant incident dismayed Bhai *ji* and he left the area. After a long journey, he reached Jammu where he established a *dharamsal* which became a famous centre of Sikh learning and preaching. He stayed there for a few years.

Bhai Addan Shah was a true Sikh with unshorn hair. When he was in Lahore he called on all Sikhs and met Muslim holy men as well. One day when he was sitting with a *pir*, the governor of Lahore came there. He was annoyed to see a Sikh as the government had decreed complete elimination of Sikhs. Prices were levied on their heads. The *pir* noticed the wrath in the governor's eye, and just to save Bhai *ji*, he said he was a Sikh of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, but Bhai *ji* strongly objected to this by saying that there is no difference between Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Sri Guru Gobind Singh. The governor left the place, highly enraged. The *pir* asked Bhai *ji* about his answer which could put him in hot waters. Bhai *ji* made it clear to him that he believed in the oneness of the ten Gurus, and to save himself from a tyrant he would not accept that he was not a Sikh of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. When Sucha Nand declared that he would destroy Sikhs and the Sikh *Panth*, Bhai Addan Shah reacted by saying that *Jhutha* (liar) Nand was babbling. The *Panth* is of the Almighty and no temporal power can crush it.

Under his guidance Sewapanthi *sadhus* started listening to discourse on Yog Vaishisht, Masanavi Maulana Rumi, Kimia-i-Sadat of Al Gazali, etc.

He prescribed a specific attire for Sewapanthi *sadhus*. Under his leadership several *sadhus* wrote religious books and treatise on various subjects. He also translated classical religious books of other religions.

Bhai Addan Shah breathed his last in 1757 CE. He had many disciples, 36 of

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them being quite prominent. They were :

Bhai Dhannu	Bhai Jatt
Bhai Mehra	Bhai Sehaj Ram
Bhai Paras Ram	Bhai Singha
Bhai Wazira	Bhai Hari Singh
Bhai Kirpa Ram	Bhai Jai Ram Singh
Bhai Varu	Bhai Nimana
Bhai Sawai Ram	Bhai Rai
Bhai Balak Ram	Bhai Daya Ram
Bhai Bharu	Bhai Sunder
Bhai Ruchi Ram	Bhai Parama
Bhai Aya Ram	Bhai Dargahi
Bhai Bhalla Ram	Bhai Balak Ram (second)
Bhai Rang	Bhai Mangu
Bhai Mani	Bhai Garu
Bhai Ram Dayal	Bhai Hari
Bhai Dukh Bhanjan	Bhai Mangu (second)
Bhai Mehar Singh	Bhai Keshdu Das
Bhai Raja Ram	Bhai Nirgun

BHAI BHALLA RAM

Bhai Bhalla Ram succeeded Bhai Addan Shah as his spiritual successor. When he met Bhai *ji* for the first time at Shahdra, the latter asked him to look after and maintain the *dharamsal* of Bhai Sewa Ram at Noorpur Thal, which was in bad shape. So he left for Noorpur Thal. On reaching there, he started the reconstruction of the *dharamsal.* In the morning and evening he would give learned discourses in the *dharamsal*, convincing masses to adopt the way of life as shown by the Gurus. During his lifetime the Pathans invaded India several times, but he always sided with the people and helped them in several ways. He saved the valuable belongings of the poor people, which were kept with him in trust.

During his lifetime, there was famine in the area, and there was also acute shortage of water. Bhai Bhalla helped the poor people with food, water, etc.

He was unhappy with the *jagirdar* of Noorpur, and so left the town forever after handing over the charge of the *dharamsal* to Bhai Jagta. After this he roamed at different places and never had a permanent *dera* or *dharamsal.* Sahiwal, Shah Jiwan, Lau, etc., were the places where he preached the Sikh thought.

At the age of 75 years, Bhai Bhalla Ram expired in 1797 CE.

BHAI JAGTA

Bhai Jagta (1741-1811 CE) succeeded Bhai Bhalla Ram. He was born in Maghian, district Jhang, now in Pakistan. Their family was very poor. He and his brother Bhai Channa were leading persons there. However, they were once falsely accused of theft, but were acquitted by the chief of the area. This incident moved Bhai Jagta so much that he decided to devote his whole life to the service of the people and higher spiritual

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pursuits. He came to Bhai Bhalla Ram, who accepted him as his disciple. The construction work of a *dharamsal* was going on. Bhai Jagta started contributing with the labour of his hand. During the nights he would twist *munj* for sale to earn his livelihood.

Bhai Bhalla Ram left for Amritsar to fulfil his desire to see Harmandir Sahib. He gave charge of the *dera / dharamsal* to Bhai Jagta, who laboured hard to improve it. On his return Bhai Bhalla Ram was impressed with his loyalty, love and sense of service, and he was so pleased that he decided Bhai Jagta would be his successor.

Bhai Jagta would serve the untouchables, and loved them like his own brothers. He was a great humanitarian and in the true sense a proponent of Singh Sabha ideology. In that area, he constructed a *dharamsal*, where boarding and lodging were free. He prepared many tanks for water storage to ease the water scarcity among the local population. He was so generous and kind to wild animals and birds, that he arranged water and food even for them in the jungle.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had great respect for Bhai Jagta. When he came to Kushak, Tiwana chiefs were afraid of him and requested Bhai Jagta to intercede on their behalf, which he willingly did. On his intervention, the Maharaja developed cordial relations with the Tiwanas, and these relations later on became permanent. Even Maharaja Kharak Singh had very good relations with Bhai Jagta, and Bhai *ji* again mediated between the *maharaja* and Tiwana chiefs. Thus, he had considerable political impact as well, although his main role was religious. He preached Sikhism, served the poor, downtrodden and low caste people. He never bothered about the opposition of anybody. He saw Almighty in all living ones. He died in 1811 CE leaving behind a large number of disciples including Bhai Hazari Ram, Bhai Sahib Ram, Bhai Bhag, Bhai Mula, Bhai Leela Ram, Bhai Kahnaiya Ram, Bhai Mahtab Singh, Bhai Jiwaya Ram, Bhai Jassa Singh, Bhai Vasti Ram,etc., but Bhai Hazari Ram succeeded him.

BHAI HAZARI RAM

Bhai Hazari Ram (1756-1826 CE) was a true saint and humanitarian like Bhai Jagta. He also served the common man and preached Sikhism. He had cordial relations with the local *jagirdar* and Sikh rulers. He was very humble by nature. Throughout his life he served mankind and preached Sikhism. He had several disciples such as Bhai Sahai Ram, Bhai Lal Chand, Bhai Darbari, etc.

BHAI SAHAI RAM

Bhai Sahai Ram (1768-1844 CE) succeeded Bhai Hazari Ram and did much for the development of this sect.

BHAI RALIYA RAM

Bhai Raliya Ram (1785-1870 CE) was his successor, who also followed the teachings and way of life of previous saints. He did much for the sect and the preaching of Sikhism.

BHAI LAKHAMI DAS

Bhai Lakhami Das (1871-1908 CE) succeeded Bhai Raliya Ram, who followed in the footsteps of his predecessors. He served in western Punjab. The *dharamsal*

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maintained by him was the refuge of tired travellers and needy people.

MAHANT GULAB SINGH

Mahant Gulab Singh (1871-1950 CE) succeeded Bhai Lakhami Das in 1908 CE. He was born in village Fazal district Mianwali. His father was Bhai Khazan Singh. He came to the *dera* at the age of ten years and served with a rare sense of dedication. He reconstructed a number of old *dharamsals* and constructed some new ones in different towns and cities. He was a great humanitarian, always serving needy people and travellers. In 1947 CE, he left West Punjab and came to East Punjab and settled at Goneana Mandi, district Bathinda. He established here the Dera Bhai Jagta *ji*. Huge buildings were constructed. Needy travellers were given free boarding and lodging. *Katha-kirtan* in the *dera* was a daily routine. In this backward area he preached Sikhism and influenced the masses. His disciples were many, but the better known among them are Bhai Hari Singh, Bhai Pokhardas, Bhai Gopal Singh, etc.

MAHANT ASSA SINGH

Mahant Assa Singh (1893-1974 CE) succeeded Mahant Gulab Singh and continued to serve the cause of Sewapanth. He preached Sikhism. He was a great scholar well versed in *katha-kirtan* and scriptures. His known disciples were Mahant Tirath Singh, Bhai Kahn Singh, Bhai Harpal Singh, etc.

MAHANT TIRATH SINGH

Mahant Tirath Singh (born in 1925 CE) succeeded Mahant Assa Singh. He is a true saint with spiritual vision and always busy with development of the sect and *Naam simran*; reciting *Gurbani* and explaining *Gurbani* to the masses. He belongs to village Jandanwala, district Mianwali (now in Pakistan). His father's name was Bhai Tara Singh. He is well-versed in Punjabi and Urdu languages as well as the Sikh scripture. He received traditional education about Sikhism and Sikh scripture from Mahant Amir Singh of Satowali Gali, Amritsar, and enjoyed the company of Sant Nehchal Singh, a great Sewapanthi *sadhu* and scholar of Sanskrit and *gurmat*. He is a great educationist for he has established or helped establish several educational institutions at various places in Punjab. He is the current chief or president of the Sewapanthi sect.

Some Important Sewapanthi Saints

There are some important Sewapanthi saints, who need special mention here. Their role in the history of the sect is very significant.

BHAI VASTI RAM : A known saint of his area, he always remained absorbed in *Naam simran*. He would get up early in the morning and perform his religious functions. He was very close to Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, a known leader of the Sikhs and direct descendant of Guru Nanak. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had deep regards for Bhai Vasti Ram. During the famine he served the masses of the area with bread and water. He died at a ripe age in 1840 CE at Shahpur.

BHAI RAM KISHAN : A saintly person always absorbed in meditation or *Naam simran*. He served the common man in several ways, particularly in the sphere of education, imparting Gurmukhi education, and financial assistance for settlement of

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debts of poor people. He was a great scholar. His commentary on *Jap (ji)* (*Jap Parmarth*) is a scholarly work, still unpublished. He died at the age of about 100 years in 1888 CE.

BHAI DUKH BHANJAN : A renowned *sadhu*, he worked for the betterment of the people by constructing *dharamsals*, ponds, wells and initiating *langar* at several *dharamsals*. When Shah Nachin, a general of Shah Zaman, invaded India, people of Punjab became very upset and some migrated to safer places in hilly areas. Bhai Dukh Bhanjan helped them. However, Shah Nachin died on his way to Punjab, so the masses returned to their homes. He was a close associate of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi. He was a very daring *sadhu*. Once Maharaja Ranjit Singh met him on the way and paid offerings. Bhai *ji* asked him whether he had learnt *Jap(ji)* by heart or not ? Maharaja's answer was in the negative. He refused to accept the offerings. The Maharaja very humbly requested for pardon and promised to learn *Jap(ji)* by heart in the near future. He played a very significant role in the development of the sect. He passed away in 1813 CE.

BABA SHAM SINGH (1803-1926 CE) : A great Sewapanthi, who was a very good *kirtania* as well. For more than seventy years he recited *Gurbani* at Harmandir Sahib and never took even a pice for this service. *Simran* and *kirtan* were his aim of life. His parents were Bhai Darbari and Krishan Devi. He was one of the five beloved ones (*Piare*) when in 1923 CE *Kar Sewa* started at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. He constructed some *deras* and renovated a number of gurdwaras. He wrote a voluminous *granth* — *Prem Prakash*, in which his memoirs, stories of saints, philosophic discussions on religious affairs, etc., are recorded. It is still in the form of manuscript. He died in 1926 CE at Amritsar.

BHAI AMIR SINGH (1870-1954 CE) : A great scholar of *Gurbani*, he was a disciple of Sant Jawahar Singh. His father's name was Bhai Prem Singh. He had been a student at Taksal of Bhai Bhagwan Singh, a great traditional scholar. He studied *Dasam Granth* from Bhai Bakshish Singh for six long years. Then he became the head of the *dera*. He taught for sixty years (1894-1954 CE). He taught *Gurbani*, *Dasam Granth*, *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas, *Gazals* of Bhai Nand Lal, *Suraj Prakash* of Bhai Santokh Singh, etc., to his students. Hundreds of his disciples became *granthis*, *katha-vachaks*, *ragis*, etc. He died on October 17, 1954 CE, at Amritsar.

BHAI NEHCHAL SINGH : A great Sewapanthi *sadhu*, he was a scholar of Sanskrit language and Sikh scripture. In the pre-partition days he was an active religious preacher in West Punjab. After the partition he settled down at Yamunanagar in Haryana. He established a *dera/tikana* there, and started some educational institutions. He served humanity in so many ways. Throughout his life he strove for the betterment of the masses and improvement of society. He was one of the most respected personalities of the age. He died in 1978 CE at Yamunanagar.

SANT KIRPAL SINGH (1915-1984 CE) : A disciple of Sant Amir Singh. His father's name was Bhai Partap Singh. He was student of Sri Kalgidhar School, Atta Mandi, Amritsar. But Bhai Amir Singh asked for him from his parents for service of the *dera* and the Sikh *Panth*. They consented and Sant Kirpal Singh left home forever. He was

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a great traditional scholar. He wrote a commentary on Sri Guru Granth Sahib in ten volumes. From 1954 CE to 1984 CE he gave traditional education to the students and produced many preachers, *granthis*, *ragis*, etc. He died in 1984 CE.

Contribution of Sewapanthis

Sewapanthis did commendable service in several fields. These *sadhus* were selfless and always ready for all kinds of service.

First and foremost, service of humanity to relieve its suffering was a matter of commitment with them. Holy men like Bhai Kahnaiya served the Gurus as well as the suffering humanity with equal zeal and respect. They treated all alike, there were no friends or foes for them. Bhai Kahnaiya's service to the wounded even of the enemy camp makes him a forerunner of the modern day Red Cross Society. These *sadhus* have since been rendering selfless service to humanity in a variety of ways.

The stress on *sewa* among them is ingrained doctrinally. As the *mahant* of Sewapanthi *tikana / dera* wants to appoint his successor, he anoints him and hands over to him two souvenirs — one broom and one bowl. This signified that the new *mahant* was expected to keep the precincts of *tikana / dera* clean by sweeping it daily. He had to do it himself. He also was expected to offer food to all the visitors. The bowl given to him reminded him of the need to serve others. This no doubt ameliorated the lot of many needy persons, but this also cultivated a sense of humility in the doer which in turn ennobled him spiritually as well as socially.

Another valuable contribution of the Sewapanthis has been in the field of education. In the medieval period, the Sewapanthi *dharamsals* were schools for students, where Gurmukhi and religious texts were taught. The main purpose of such education was preaching Sikhism to the masses. The *sadhus* would write selections from *Gurbani* in *pothis* and provide them to the students so that they might learn *Gurbani* by heart. There were several *sadhus* like Bhai Rang who would regularly copy about four pages of Sri Guru Granth Sahib daily and send to different *dharamsals* of the area. They prepared an ink which was known as *Addanshahi siahi* (ink). Sri Guru Granth Sahib and other *pothis* were written in this ink by these *sadhus*.

Bhai Addan Shah encouraged comparative study. *Yog Vaishisht*, *Kimia-i-Saadat*, *Masanavi Maula Rumi*, etc., were major works, which were translated by these *sadhus* in Punjabi so as to enable the common man to look into other religions. In the evening, exegesis of *Masanavi*, *Yog Vaishisht*, *Kimia-i-Saadat* was a common practice.

Today, several educational institutions are run by the sect at different places in India. In the days before the partition of Punjab in 1947, Bhai Ram Kishan School at Shahpur (now in Pakistan), Khalsa High School, Mitha Tiwana, Bhai Jagta School and Noorpur Thal, were major institutions where *Gurmat* as well as general education was imparted.

After partition Sewapanthis established several educational institutions in India such as the Khalsa College for Boys, Guru Nanak High School for Girls, Guru Nanak College for Women and Sant Nehchal Singh Public School at Yamunanagar; Bhai Jagta

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Model School, Bhai Assa Singh College for Girls at Goneana (Bathinda); Bhai Ram Kishan Gurmat Public School, Patiala; Bhai Aiya Ram High School, Rohtak; Bhai Gopal Singh Institute of Competitions and Employment, Patiala; etc. These are very good institutions providing quality education to students.

Sewapanthis take keen interest in the Sikh Education Conferences. Due to their persuasion, Sri Guru Harkrishan Public School, Bathinda, and Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Polytechnical College, Chhapianwala (near Malout in present-day district of Mukatsar), were established. There is also a proposal to start Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Medical College and Baba Sahib Singh Bedi Engineering / Technical College at Ludhiana.

To spread Sikhism and to train preachers, Bhai Amir Singh of Sattowali Gali, Amritsar, established a *Taksal* where Sri Guru Granth Sahib, *Dasam Granth*, *Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, *Bani Bhai Gurdas and Nand Lal*, etc., are taught. Bhai Kirpal Singh published a commentary on Sri Guru Granth Sahib in ten volumes. Now Sant Makhan Singh and Surjit Singh are imparting religious education to students.

The Sewapanthis made a significant contribution to *Gurbani* exegesis. Although they do not constitute a distinct school of exegesis, yet their contribution cannot be ignored. Like the Nirmala schools, the Sewapanthi scholars tried to give multiple meanings to a word in the scripture. In fact, sometimes they tried to extend this multiplicity to ludicrous lengths. Still it remains a fact that they had a sincere intent, and their faith in the Guru and the *Sabad* was unquestionable.

Sewapanthi Literature

As stated above, some of the Sewapanthi *sadhus* were scholars of considerable merit. Besides interpretation of *bani* and delivering discourses on it, they wrote several books on various subjects and translated some classical books for the purpose of propagation of ethical values and spiritual ideas among the masses. This indicates their broad outlook, urge for higher learning and spiritual quest. Bhai Addan Shah was a great scholar and his disciples were also scholars of repute, like Bhai Sehaj Ram, Bhai Garu, Bhai Mangu, *et al.* Under his supervision and guidance several important books were written. Even today *Sewapathis* are writing on religious subjects. Some of the more important titles are given below :

Bhai Sehaj Ram : *Parchi Bhai Kahnaiya* (prose)
Parchi Bhai Addan Shah (verse)
Parchi Bhai Sewa Ram (verse)
Parchi Rabia ji ki (verse)
Parchi Awaish Karni (verse)
Parchi Mansur ji ki (verse)
Parchi Fuzail Sain (prose)
Sakhian Bhai Addan Shah (prose)
Pothi Assawarian (prose)
Bachan Gobind Lokan ké (prose)
Sukhan Faqiran ké (prose)

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Sadhu Sadanand :	*Sidhan Rahasya Granth* (verse)
	Vigyan Araq Tika (verse)
	Translation of 35 Upanishads (verse)
	Tika Vicharmala (verse)
	Gian Kasauti (verse)
	Vaishisht (verse)
	Tika Viveksar
	Vidyanidh
Lala Ram :	*Gurbilas* (verse)
	Sri Gur Jas Hulas (verse)
	Sri Gur Jas Parkash (verse)
	Baramaha Sri Guru Sahib Singh Bedi
	Baramaha Sri Guru Sahib Singh Bedi (second)
	Baramaha Sri Guru Suraj Singh
Bhai Sobha Ram :	*Sant Mal* (verse)
	Gurbilas Baba Sahib Singh Bedi (verse)
Bhai Addan Shah :	*Viveksar of Bhai Daya Ram – Addan Shah Prashanotri*
Gopal Dass :	*Brahm Gian*
Bhai Ram Kishan :	*Jap Parmarth*
Sadhu Daya Singh :	*Prem Prakash*
Hardyal Bhakhar :	*Anter Ramayan*
Sant Attar Singh :	*Sant Rehat Rattan Mala*
Sant Kirpal Singh :	*Zafarnamah Steek*
	Sri Guru Granth Sahib Sampardai (10 Volumes)
Lal Chand :	*Sant Rattan Mal*
Sant Sham Singh :	*Bhagti Prem Prakash*
Bhai Garu (trans.) :	*Paras Bhag*
Bhai Mangu (trans.) :	*Masnavi Bhakha*
Mahant Tirth Singh :	*Jap Bodh*
	Siddh-Gost Steek
Sant Kahn Singh :	*Baramaha Steek*
	Anand Sahib Steek
Sant Surjit Singh :	*Sarkutawali Steek*
Sant Manna Singh :	*Paryaya Sri Guru Granth ji ki*

The above mentioned list of their literary works reveals that their field of literature and learning was very vast and varied. These *sadhus* wrote life sketches of Sewapanthi *sadhus* on the pattern of *Janamsakhis* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. They also wrote in verse and prose about the saints of their sect. They wrote *sakhis* to educate the common man. The main emphasis was on moral and ethical values. Traditional exegesis of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was published by *sants* of this sect for the first time. Their prose and verse have high literary merit. Their contribution to religious literature is highly commendable.

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It may be concluded that the Sewapanthi sect is an integral part of the Sikh *Panth*. The Sewapanthis never claimed a separate identity. Right from Bhai Kahnaiya to date, these *sadhus* have been serving the Khalsa *Panth* in several ways. Their contribution to Sikhism is very important. During the hard days and the periods of crises when Khalsa was struggling for survival, these *sadhus* preached Sikh ideology in a very simple way. Indeed they maybe called the torch-bearers of Sikhism in the 18th century.

— *G.S.*

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EMINENT SIKHS OF THE GURU PERIOD

Baba Budha

Baba Budha, whose original name was Burha, was born on October 22, 1506 CE.[1] His father's name was Sugha and mother's Gauran. They lived in Kathu Nangal, a village in present-day Amritsar district. Later, they shifted to Dhalla village not far from the river Ravi opposite Kartarpur.

When Sri Guru Nanak Dev was returning to Kartarpur, he saw a boy grazing cattle in the fields nearby. The boy came to him, paid obeisance and enquired if he could render any service to him. The Guru was much impressed by the demeanour and civility of the boy, who with passage of time, became more and more attached to the Guru.

The next morning Burha took a pot of butter-milk with butter floating in it, went to the Guru and presented it with reverence and humility. He listened to the Guru's sermons with the devotion of a true seeker. Then he beseeched the Guru to tell him the way to the state of bliss. Burha's questions were so profound that the Guru remarked that Burha was young in age but old in wisdom, and that he was not Burha but Budha, an awakened being. From then on Burha came to be known as Bhai Budha and later Baba Budha. He became a devotee of the Guru, spending most of his time with him. Thus it was that Baba Budha entered into discipleship of the Guru at the age of ten.

Baba Budha always looked after the welfare of the Sikhs, and spared no pains to spread the Sikh faith among the people. Whenever a crisis loomed over the *Panth*, he was always there to help find a solution to save the situation.

On Sri Guru Nanak Dev's death in 1539 CE, Sri Guru Angad Dev left Kartarpur and established his seat at Khadur near the river Beas. Sri Chand, the elder son of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, was not happy at being overlooked in favour of Angad. Sri Guru Angad Dev, to avoid open clash with the son of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, retired to the house of an old Sikh, Bibi Bhirai, of village Sanghar. Baba Budha came all the way from Kartarpur to Khadur, and prevailed upon the Guru to grant audience to the Sikhs. At the time of (Guru) Amar Das' nomination to guruship, similar crisis gripped

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the Sikhs. Sri Guru Amar Das, because of his deep regard for Sri Guru Angad Dev, did not want to annoy his son, Baba Datu, who burned with jealousy at the ascension of Guru Amar Das to *gurgaddi*. He, therefore, retired to a hut in the jungle near Basarke village, with instructions that he should not be disturbed. It was again Baba Budha who persuaded the Guru to attend to his Sikhs who were regularly calling at Goindwal. Exercising his influence, Baba Budha was able to assuage Baba Datu also.

On ascendence of Sri Guru Arjun Dev to *gurgaddi*, Pirthi Chand, who himself wanted to be the Guru, entered into collusive arrangement with the *masands*, and pretended that he was the real Guru. Baba Budha was one of those Sikhs who with resoluteness denounced Pirthi Chand, and foiled his cunning attempts to usurp the *gurgaddi*. It was primarily due to the lead provided by Baba Budha and Bhai Gurdas that Pirthi Chand did not succeed in bringing about schism among the Sikhs, although he had tried hard.

Baba Budha was a great mystic and a great teacher. Though records do not speak much as to how he received his education, yet it is reasonable to surmise that he received his education at Kartarpur at the feet of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. He was well-versed in the divine hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and other Gurus, and would quote these profusely during his talks. When Sri Guru Angad Dev decided to popularise Gurmukhi script and Punjabi language, he assigned the task of teaching it to Baba Budha. He also tutored Guru Hargobind.

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was also taught by Baba Budha. Sri Guru Hargobind personally took him (Tegh Bahadur) to Baba Budha, the wisest among teachers and said : "You were kind enough to be my teacher, O Enlightened One, accept my son also as your pupil."

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur bowed before the sage who blessed him and accepted him as his student. He, along with Bhai Gurdas, made arrangements for his education in subjects such as languages, history and arithmetic. At an older age, he was taught the elements of Buddhist, Jain, Siddha, Nath, Vaisnav and Islamic creeds.

Baba Budha was an activist, and took part in almost all important projects initiated by the Gurus. When Sri Guru Ram Das started the excavation of the *sarovar* at Amritsar, Baba Budha took upon himself the responsibility of supervising the digging operations. It was under his fostering care that the *sarovar* was completed. Again, during Sri Guru Arjun Dev's time, he was the person who oversaw the raising of Harmandir Sahib in the midst of the *amritsar* (pool of immortality). The construction of brick steps around the pool was done under his supervision. Kaulsar was also excavated under his supervision. The emergence of the city of Amritsar as a thriving centre of commerce also owed much to his sagacious advice and the devotion with which he set about the task to convince people in the neighbouring areas to settle there.

When *Adi Granth* was installed at Darbar Sahib, Baba Budha was assigned the duty of reading from it in the morning and evening. Having placed the bound copy of *Adi Granth* on a cot, Baba Budha carried it on his head barefooted to Harmandir Sahib

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followed by Sri Guru Arjun Dev, also barefooted, waving a fan of peacock feathers over the sacred scripture. Bhai Gurdas was the third to follow at the head of the barefooted *sangat*. As the head-priest of Harmandir Sahib, Baba Budha laid down the procedure to be followed meticulously in Harmandir Sahib. He was always aware of the exigencies of the circumstances and lost no time to take the required steps. When Guru Hargobind was imprisoned in the fort, he himself went to Gwalior to bring the news about the Guru.

The greatest contribution of Baba Budha was to render the much-needed help to the *sangat* in making explicit the concept of *miri* and *piri*, which meant that the political as well as spiritual sovereignty vested in the Guru. Sri Guru Arjun Dev trained Guru Hargobind in the philosophy of this dual responsibility.

When the sixth Nanak ascended the *gurgaddi*, Baba Budha, following the advice of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, offered Guru Hargobind two swords, which the Guru donned, one as the symbol of *miri* (temporal sovereignty) and the other as the symbol of *piri* (spiritual sovereignty). This explicit pronouncement caused a furore among the Sikhs. Some of them, incapable of grasping the import of the Sikh movement in all its aspects, began to entertain doubts regarding the validity and desirability of the policy. Baba Budha not only helped clear the misgivings of such people, but also made them understand the perspective which was responsible for the enunciation of such a policy.

The great sage passed his last days in meditation at Jhanda Ram Das, or simply called Ramdas, where the family had shifted from its native Kathu Nangal. As the end came on 16th November, 1631 CE, Guru Hargobind was at his bedside. The Guru, as says *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, gave his shoulder to his bier, and performed the last rites. Bhai Gurdas, further to quote the *Gurbilas*, started a reading of the *Adi Granth* in memory of the deceased. Two shrines stand in Ramdas commemorating Baba Budha, Gurdwara Tap Asthan Baba Budha *ji*, where the family lived on the southern edge of the village, and Gurdwara Samadhan, where he was cremated.

Bhai Mardana

Bhai Mardana was the closest associate and the first disciple of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. According to Manohar Dass Meharban, Mardana had been the companion of Sri Guru Nanak Dev since childhood. Both Bhai Mardana and Sri Guru Nanak Dev were born at Talwandi Rai Bhoi Ki, Bhai Mardana in 1459 CE and Sri Guru Nanak Dev in 1469 CE. Mardana's original name was Dana. Mardana was the name conferred on him by Sri Guru Nanak Dev. The name of Dana's father was Bhai Badrew and mother Bibi Lakho. According to Bhai Kahn Singh, Mardana breathed his last in 1534 CE and Sri Guru Nanak Dev himself performed his last rites.

Badrew and Mardana called every morning at the houses of local residents and obtained alms, generally in kind. Both would sing to the accompaniment of the *rabab*, and receiving alms, would move next door. According to Principal Satbir Singh :

> Nanak and Mardana first came into contact in 1480 CE at Talwandi, while, once lying under a tree, the sound of someone's playing on the *rabab* reached his (Sri Guru Nanak

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Dev's) ears. He rose, approached the man playing on the *rabab*, and asked his name. He answered, 'Sir, Mirassi (bard) people call me by the name Dana.'

Hearing this, Baba appreciated his fine playing on the *rabab* and his excellent understanding of *raags*. Baba asked Mardana to accompany him to play the *rabab* and sing the *Sabad* with him, so that he would get the better of both the worlds. To this Dana replied, 'We hardly make our both ends meet by singing *raags* before the rich. In case we follow you, our families would starve, we shall miss our prayer (*Namaz*) even, and thus, we might stand condemned in both the worlds. How do you plan to liberate me ?' Sri Guru Nanak Dev said, 'O Dana ! You are ignorant. God protects and feeds us all. *namaz* (prayer) and *roza* (fast) are benedictions bestowed by God. God's abode is the heart of the saints. At the final judgement, none shall come to the rescue.' Sri Guru Nanak Dev further emphasised, 'Dana, in case you now turn to be *Mardana* (brave) and play *rabab* along with singing the Word of God (*Sabad*), you will gain in both the worlds.' Dana, now transformed into Mardana, set out with Sri Guru Nanak Dev to enlighten the people living in this world. Mardana played on the *rabab* and Sri Guru Nanak Dev sang the *Sabad*. Often Mardana would accompany the Guru in singing the divine Word. Thus the *kirtan* originated among Sikhs.[2]

In the course of time, Nanak left Talwandi, and went to Sultanpur Lodhi, where he was employed in the service of Daulat Khan Lodhi, the governor of Jalandhar Doab. Nanak, after some period of time, sent for Bhai Mardana from Talwandi. He came in response to Sri Guru Nanak Dev's call, and began to reside at Sultanpur with him.

After the divine experience at Sultanpur, the Guru decided to awaken the people to the reality by undertaking long and arduous journeys in the four directions. To begin with, he proceeded to the eastern part of the subcontinent, and also covered places in the south including Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

All the time, during these travels, Mardana was with Sri Guru Nanak Dev. *Janamsakhis* are replete with anecdotes portraying the wit and wisdom of Mardana. Barring a few episodes which are either concocted or associated purposely with the fair name of Bhai Mardana, possibly to emphasise that the Guru had the unique power of transforming brass into gold, all other stories touch the deepest chords of human heart as also the root problems of the world which hamper human progress. Hunger, thirst, family problems, poverty, insecurity, etc., were some of the things, which often tormented Mardana, as much as any other human being, but he did not allow himself to be given to them, and with sustained effort reached the stage of identification with the Guru. At the end of the first itinerary, when Mardana reached Talwandi, his wife and children tried to stop him from going again with Sri Guru Nanak Dev, but he did not agree. Now he was awakened. So, he again accompanied Sri Guru Nanak Dev on his journey to West Asia.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Mardana sailed for Saudi Arabia along with other *hajis*. Having visited Mecca and Medina, they reached Baghdad, the capital of the caliph of Islam. As usual, they stayed outside the town near a graveyard. Sri Guru Nanak Dev's visit to Baghdad is recorded in the *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas:

Baba went to Baghdad, and put up outside the city. The Immortal-personified Baba

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was accompanied by the *rabab*-player Mardana.[3]

On the roadside, Nanak began to sing hymns in praise of God, and Mardana played a symphonic strain on his *rabab*. Although people could not understand the language of the hymns, yet the melodious voice and the emotion with which the hymns were being sung, produced a soothing effect on their minds.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev passed the last two decades of his life at Kartarpur. Mardana also came to settle at this place. His wife and two sons, Shahzada and Raizada, also joined him.

In 1534 CE, Mardana fell ill. He grew increasingly weak, and there was little hope of recovery. Visualising the approaching end of Mardana, Sri Guru Nanak Dev asked if his body after death may be let into water like Brahmins, or it may be cremated like Khatris, or it may be thrown to the winds like one of the Parsis or it may be buried like that of a Muslim. Mardana answered, "Well, Baba ! You are talking of the body. By the grace of your teachings, I have entirely forgotten about it. Now, I regard my soul as the sole guardian of my body." Again Sri Guru Nanak Dev said, "Do you wish to be made famous by having a suitable tomb constructed in your memory ?" Mardana replied, "When my soul has been separated from its bodily tomb why shut it up in a stone sepulchre."

Baba stepped forward, took Mardana in his embrace and declared, "Mardana, you have realised the Infinite."

The following morning, a watch before day-break, Mardana passed away.

Mardana was a master *rabab* player. He improved the old form of the instrument by fixing four to six strings to a hollow base so as to produce a deep and mellow resonance.

Sajjan Thagg

Bhai Sajjan Sheikh, a resident of village Tulamba, now known as Makhdumpur (distt Multan, Pakistan) was a robber. He had established a *dera* for the pilgrims and other passengers. He used to rob all those who would stay there. He was reformed by Sri Guru Nanak Sahib. Later, he became a dedicated Sikh. Guru Sahib appointed him as a missionary of the Sikh faith. A Gurdwara was built at Makhdumpur in the memory of the visit of Guru Sahib to the Dera of Bhai Sajjan. It had to be abandoned in 1947. The following hymn of Sri Guru Nanak is said to have been recorded relating to Sajjan Thag indicating his previous condition:

> Bronze is bright and shining, but by rubbing its sable blackness appears.
> By washing its impurity is removed not, even thought it be washed a hundred times.
> They along are the friends who travel with me as I go along and are seen standing there,
> where the account is called for. Pause
> House, mansions and sky-scrappers, painted on all sides, but hollow from within, are
> like the crumbled and useless ruins.
> The herons arrayed in white feathers abide in places of pilgrimage.
> Tearing and rendering they eat the living beings and cannot be called white.
>
> – Guru Granth Sahib, p 729

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Bhai Lalo

Bhai Lalo Ghataurha, a carpenter, was a resident of Saidpur (now known as Eminabad). He was a dedicated Sikh of the time of Sri Guru Nanak Sahib. Bhai Lalo was known for his honest earning and benevolence. Sri Guru Nanak Sahib visited him several times and stayed with him along with Bhai Mardana. When Sri Guru Nanak Sahib visited Bhai Lalo for the first time, Malik Bhago, a rich man of Saidpur, was holding a feast. He had invited every body to his feast. Sri Guru Nanak Sahib refused to eat his food. When he came to know about this, he sent his men to bring Sri Guru Nanak Sahib to his place. Sri Guru Nanak Sahib went to his house. He asked Guru Sahib why did he refuse to eat his food, Guru Sahib told him, "Your food has not been bought with honestly earned money, hence it appears like blood." He again asked Guru Sahib, "Why do you eat food from a (so-called) low-caste person?" Sri Guru Nanak Sahib told him, "Bhai Lalo earns his money by honest means; hence his food appears like milk; and, moreover, a person who worships the Almighty cannot be classed as low-caste". Malik Bhago could not say anymore. Finally, he too bowed before Sri Guru Nanak Sahib. In 1521 the town had been ruined by Babar's army. A hymn, *Babar Vani*, depicting the scene of ruined Saidpur, composed by Sri Guru Nanak Sahib, had been addressed to Bhai Lalo. Bhai Lalo had one daughter. Not much is known about Bhai Lalo's life.

> *Tilang* 1st Guru
>
> As the word of the Lord comes to me, so do I utter, O Lalo,
>
> Bringing the marriage party of sin, Babar has hastened from Kabul and demands perforce the gift of our land, etc., O Lalo.
>
> Modesty and righteousness both have vanished, and falsehood moves about as the leader, O Lalo.
>
> The function of the Qazis and the Brahmins is taken over by the satan who now reads the marriage rites.
>
> The Muslim women read the Quran and in suffering call upon God, O Lalo
>
> The Hindu women of high caste and others of low caste, may also be put in the same category, O Lalo.
>
> Nanak, the eulogies of Murder are sung, and the saffron of blood is sprinkled, O Lalo.
>
> – Guru Granth Sahib, pp 722-23

Bhai Gurdas

A brilliant scholar, a great poet, a devoted Sikh, a zealous missionary, an astute organiser and a great visionary, Bhai Gurdas was born in 1551 CE. He was son of Ishwar Das, who was the son of Chander Bhan, an uncle of Sri Guru Amar Das. Thus, Bhai Gurdas was the nephew of Sri Guru Amar Das. His mother's name was Jeoni. He was thus, the first cousin of Bibi Bhani, who was daughter of Sri Guru Amar Das, wife of Guru Ram Das and mother of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. His parents belonged to village Basarke, but later migrated to Goindwal, the headquarters of Sri Guru Amar Das. Since his childhood Gurdas had fascination for Sikh *sangat*. His father died when he was three years old and his mother when he was twelve. According to Hari Ram Gupta :

> He possessed a sweet and melodious voice, and enthusiastically participated in singing

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hymns. He developed great love and affection for the Guru's teachings. He picked up Gurmukhi and learnt by heart *Gurbani*. He seldom missed any divine service.[7]

According to *Mahankosh*, Bhai Gurdas adopted Sikhism through the blessings of Guru Ram Das, the fourth Nanak, and did an in-depth study of *gurmat* under the guidance of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. Very soon he became proficient in the languages of contemporary use, particularly Punjabi, Sanskrit, Braj, and Persian as well as the ideology of Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism, and science of music.

He remained in close association with the third, fourth, fifth and sixth Gurus from 1579 CE to 1637 CE for about fifty eight years. Naturally, his stance and psyche bore the stamp of their teachings. His devotion to the Gurus knew no bounds.

When Guru Ram Das started building the city of Amritsar, he called Bhai Gurdas and asked him to look after the development of the new township, and to persuade people from the neighbourhood to settle there. On the ascension of Sri Guru Arjun Dev to *gurgaddi*, Guru Ram Das' eldest son, Pirthi Chand, became hostile to his brother. He started collecting offerings from *sangat* in the name of the Guru, and would usurp these himself. Thus, the offerings reaching *guru ghar* became a trickle. Bhai Gurdas, with the active help of Baba Budha, successfully countered the false propaganda of Pirthi Chand, and warned the Sikh *sangat* against his designs. The financial crisis was solved by asking the Guru to allow him to introduce the *daswandh* system among the Sikhs. *Daswandh* means one tenth of the income of a *gursikh* for the *golak* of the Guru. These *golaks* were kept with the *masands*, who would at regular intervals bring the money to the Guru.

Being an erudite scholar, he was chosen as the scribe when Sri Guru Arjun Dev decided to compile the *Adi Granth*. The Guru selected a site two kilometres to the east of the *sarovar* in a grove of *Beri* trees (*Ziziphus Jujuba*) on the bank of another *sarovar*, called Ramsar. For four hours every day the Guru would give dictation and Bhai Gurdas would continue writing without a pause. The *Granth* was written in the Gurmukhi script. Bhai Gurdas' own writings, although not included in it, were described by the Guru as 'the key' to understanding of the philosophy propounded in *Gurbani*.

When Emperor Akbar was on a visit to Lahore, he stayed at Batala for some time. Pirthi Chand is believed to have complained to the emperor that Sri Guru Arjun Dev in the *Adi Granth* had denounced both Hinduism and Islam. The emperor ordered that the complaint be checked. The Guru sent the *Adi Granth* under the custody of Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budha. Akbar asked Bhai Gurdas to read at a certain place. Bhai Gurdas at once complied, but the emperor found nothing offensive to Muslim susceptibilities.

Bhai *ji* suffered extreme mental agony when Sri Guru Arjun Dev was executed. He was present in the congress of the important Sikhs held at the instance of the Guru on the eve of his departure to Lahore in 1606 CE. He was amongst those who listened to the parting message of the Guru.

Bhai Gurdas played a vital role in bringing forth the essence of the doctrine of *miri-piri*, whereby the Guru was seen as the sovereign of both spirituality as well as temporality.

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Bhai Gurdas will ever be remembered for his compositions, known as *Varan*, in which he explained the main tenets of Sikhism apart from giving general information regarding men and matters of his times. He wrote 40 *vars*, and 356 *kabits* (in Braj). These compositions contain several references to persons and events which are of great importance to historians of today.

There are a number of passages in 39 *vars*, which deserve particular attention from a historian's point of view, viz. :

Var 1 : *pauri* 17-48.
Var 11 : gives the names of important Sikhs, who lived during the time of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Hargobind.
Var 21 : *pauri* 13-31.
Var 24 : *pauri* 1-25.
Var 3 : *pauri* 12.
Var 20 : *pauri* 1.
Var 38 : *pauri* 20.

It is really surprising that Bhai Gurdas did not write anything about the compilation of the *Adi Granth* and the execution of Sri Guru Arjun Dev. The reference to the execution of the fifth Guru is indirect and vague. He writes :

> Profound indeed was Sri Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom. As a fish swims into the depth of flowing water, so Sri Guru Arjun Dev lived deep into the eternal stream of Lord's presence. As the moth flings its body into flame sacrificing itself on it, so Sri Guru Arjun Dev submitted his body to the torture of fire and heat and blended his soul with the undying flame of God.
>
> As a deer cares not for the deadly arrows of the hunter but runs heedlessly towards the call of the drum, Sri Guru Arjun Dev cared not for the cruel hands of the murderer but marched on fearlessly to face a martyr's death, keeping all the time his mind absorbed in the celestial music within his soul...
>
> As a butterfly, when trapped in the petals of the lotus flower dies in the joy of its fragrance and honey, so Sri Guru Arjun Dev cared not for any physical torture but kept his mind unsullied in the fragrance of the Lord's love. Like a rain-bird, thirsting only for a drop of rain and no other water, Sri Guru Arjun Dev abandoned all worldly opportunities offered to him and desired but an abiding repose in the love and Will of God. So deeply was he absorbed in the undisturbed and unbroken vision of the Lord, that he was enlightened and elevated spirit conquered all sorrow and pain and his soul rested peacefully in the eternal embraces of God's love. I am a sacrifice unto Sri Guru Arjun Dev, the Perfect one.[8]

Bhai Gurdas' compositions are a key to understanding of the Sikh doctrines, organisation, cosmology, metaphysics and theology. He dwelt on the disciple-preceptor relationship, and the spirit that the Gurus were. His compositions provide perspective, which enables the reader to grasp the true import of the theme. He saw the Gurus as benefactors, redeemers and prophets. He regarded *sangat* as a school for spiritualization, soul culturalization and socialization of the individuals. Moreover, he spelt very methodically the process of regeneration of the degenerate man. He also explained in

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depth what is meant by Universal Brotherhood in Sikhism.

Bhai Gurdas chose to remain celibate throughout his life. He was, however, no advocate of asceticism. On the contrary he rated a householder's life as highest among the *dharams*. In his *Kabit* number 376, Bhai Gurdas expounds :

> Among the lakes the ocean is great, among the mountains Sumer is the highest, among the trees the sandal tree is the finest, golden swan among the birds and lion among the animals are great, among stones the philosopher's stone and among the musical measures, *Sri Raag* is the chief one ... ... likewise, among all the *dharams*, performance of the duties of household life is the greatest.

Bhai Gurdas breathed his last in early 1632 CE, having lived a life as an ideal for the Sikhs of his time and the Sikhs to come after him.[9]

Bidhi Chand

Bidhi Chand was a great warrior as well as preacher of the time of Sri Guru Hargobind. He belonged to village Sur Singh, 34 kilometres south of Amritsar. His father's name was Vassan and his grandfather's, Bhikki. His mother was from Sarhali, another village in the same district. In his youth, he fell into bad company and took to banditry. He was known for his daring and ruthlessness. One day, a pious Sikh, Bhai Adali of the village Chohla, led him to Sri Guru Arjun Dev. The Master's glimpse metamorphosed him, and he now cofined his activities to punishing the evil-doers and the tyrannous officials of the government. For this reason, he was labelled as 'Robinhood of Majha' by Dr Tirlochan Singh in his scholarly treatise on Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. Soon he learned what Sikhism stood for in religious as well as temporal domains. For his dedication Sri Guru Arjun Dev loved him much and included him among the five Sikhs whom the Guru selected to accompany him to Lahore in 1606 CE.

He was a witness to how the fifth Guru was tortured to death and how serene and calm he remained up to the last. He also observed the donning of two swords, one symbolizing *piri*, and the other *miri* by Guru Hargobind, proclaiming that these domains were not exclusive to each other, but rather interconnected and complementary and essential for the integrated development of mankind. He also participated as a trainer in the military exercises and camps which the Guru organised to impart training to his Sikhs in martial arts. The Guru also chose him to be one of the commanders of the armed forces.

As a commander and a soldier he displayed great feats of valour in the battles the Guru had to fight against the Mughal imperialists.

When Tegh Bahadur, the youngest son of the sixth Nanak, crossed his childhood, he was put under the charge of Bidhi Chand for military training as well as to grasp the import of Sikh heroism.

Once, Emperor Shahjahan and Sri Guru Hargobind were hunting in the same forest. Sri Guru Hargobind's hunting party pursued a hawk, which probably belonged to the emperor. Guru's party cleverely captured it with the help of their own hawk. At this the leader of the Imperial party demanded the same for the emperor. The

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Sikhs refused because according to the rules of the hunting the hawk belonged to the man who captured it and now they refused to give it under threat. There was a clash between the two parties. The Imperial party was led by Faujdar Ghulam Rasul Khan while Bidhi Chand was the leader of the Sikh party. In the skirmish the leader of the Imperial party was wounded and two of his men were killed.

Feeling insulted at the defeat of the Imperial party, the Lahore governor, probably at the nod of Shahjahan, sent a detachment of troops under Mukhlis Khan, said to be a son of Mirza Aziz Koka.

About this time, the Guru was to solemnize the marriage of his only daughter, Bibi Viro with Bhai Sadhu of Malla village. He immediately sent a messenger to the bridegroom's father that the marriage party should wait at village Jhabal. The onslaught of the Imperial army was met at Lohgarh, built around 1609 CE, where twenty five brave Sikhs fought to the last man. They used wooden cannons and prevented the Mughal army from entering the city till the evacuation of women, children and other non-combatants was complete. Among the leading commanders of the Sikh army was Bhai Bidhi Chand, who fought with great valour. Bidhi Chand won great accolades from the Guru for his determination and excellent generalship.

The Mughal government was enraged at the victory of the Guru, who being aware of this fact decided to retire to the semi-desert wastelands of Bathinda to avoid immediate clash. About this time, the Guru had sent one of his devoted Sikhs to purchase horses in Central Asia. The Sikh, Bhai Sadh, went to Balkh, but found no suitable horses. From Balkh, he went to Baghdad, and purchased three horses of the finest breed. On his return journey, he was joined by Mohsin Fani, who later wrote *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, at Kabul where he was waiting for a caravan on its way to India.

At Lahore, Khalil Beg, governor of the Punjab, along with his son, visited the caravan in which the merchandise was opened for sale. They were fascinated at the sight of Bhai Sadh's horses. They asked for their price. Sadh told them that they were not for sale. The son of Khalil Beg forcibly took possession of two horses. Sadh tried to reason with them but to no avail. Exasperated, Sadh managed to ride the third horse to Sri Guru Hargobind, who at that time was camping at village Rupa. Mohsin Fani records:

> Eventually, he brought three Iraqi horses. The brutal Khalil Beg saw them and carried them off. The horses did not prove lucky for him. Within a year, his son who was responsible for that act, died and the governor himself fell into disgrace and degradation.[10]

The seizure of the horses was taken very seriously by the Sikhs, who regarded this as a challenge to their ideology of sovereignty, which was very dear to them. It was against this background that Bidhi Chand undertook the responsibility to recover the horses at all costs. The task was no doubt difficult, but still more difficult was to compromise with the wanton high-handedness of the Mughal high-profile mandarins.

Bidhi Chand went to Lahore to achieve his mission of recovering the horses. He contacted one Bhai Jiwan, who was a Sikh by conviction and carpenter by profession, and was equally interested in getting the horses back. Bhai Jiwan provided him a *khurpa*, a hand tool with sharp-edged blade of iron fixed with a wooden handle for grubbing

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up grass. With this in hand, Bidhi Chand posed as a grubber. Soon he gained access to Sondha Khan, the stable-keeper, and so managed things that he was appointed to supply grass to the steeds, which were special to the upper echelons of the Mughal bureaucracy. Bidhi Chand worked hard for some days during which he won the admiration of the officials and his equals alike. One night, finding the official watchman lying in slumber, he placed the saddle on one of the horses seized from Bhai Sadh, and struck it with a whip. The horse which had never previously been struck, on receiving a cut with a whip, roused himself at the unusual summons, gathered his strength, set his limbs, and on Bidhi Chand's command cleared without hesitation the high battlement and plunged with his rider into the river. Bidhi Chand, well-skilled in horsemanship, steadied the animal in the water and guided him safely to the shore, and then to village Bhai Rupa, where the Guru was camping at that time. In the morning, when Sondha Khan came to know about the disappearance of one of the two best steeds of the emperor, felt much perturbed. The trackers were sent all around, but no clue could be found.

Bhai Bidhi Chand was not fully satisfied. He resolved to recover the second horse also. He, therefore, went to Lahore and declared that he was an experienced tracker and astrologer and could trace anything that had been lost. Soon he attracted the attention of the stable-keeper who entreated him to locate where the horse was.

Bidhi Chand examined the place, visited the stable, and caressed the second horse, who responded with low neighing. Then he sat in meditation. After a while, he said he would ride the horse in the compound to see if it could jump up as high as the fort wall. Just at that very place he mounted the horse, jumped over the high battlements, and plunged with it into the river. He made haste for the Guru's camp and produced it before him. The Guru was highly pleased, and took Bidhi Chand in his embrace.

Emperor Shahjahan was enraged when the news of the horses missing from the royal stables reached him. At his nod, Mughal forces were ordered under the command of Qamar Beg and Lala Beg to confront the Guru. A tough battle was fought in 1634 CE (17th *Poh*, 1691 BK) between the Mughal forces and the Sikhs at Lehira Beg on Bathinda-Barnala road. The Mughal commanders were slain and the remnants of their army retreated to Lahore. Bidhi Chand was one of the three (the other two being Jati Mal and Rai Jodha) who were specially honoured by the Guru for their bravery and military skill.

In the battle of Kartarpur, which was fought between the Mughal forces under the command of Kalé Khan, the brother of Mukhlis Khan, who had been killed in the battle of Amritsar by the Sikhs. Bidhi Chand's valour exacted praise from one and all. Kalé Khan was killed in this battle.

Besides being a brave warrior, Bidhi Chand was well-versed in Sikh lore and tenets. From Kiratpur, the Guru sent him to eastern provinces of the subcontinent to enlighten people about the Guru's creed. It speaks volumes of the all-round development of Sikh character that a warrior could be sent out as a missionary. At Deonagar in the Gangetic planes, he met Pir Buddan Shah's disciple, Pir Sundar Shah.

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A deep bond of mutual affection was established between the two. At the death of Pir Buddan Shah, Sundar Shah came to Kiratpur to pay homage to his Master. Sundar Shah urged Bidhi Chand to once more visit his place. Bidhi Chand could not think of leaving the Guru, because he wished to serve him to the last, but he promised to come towards his last days. Sundar Shah was very happy and assured him that they would leave their earthly vesture together. In September 1638 CE, Bidhi Chand felt that his end was near. He sought the Guru's leave to go to his friend Sundar Shah at Deonagar.

Sri Guru Hargobind praised the services of Bidhi Chand and called him one of the rarest gems amongst his disciples. Bidhi Chand received all the blessings from the Guru, and when he touched the feet of the Master, Sri Guru Hargobind hugged him and praised him to the congregation.

Bidhi Chand went to Deonagar, and it is said that both he and his Muslim friend, Pir Sundar Shah, sat in meditation and departed from this world on the same day, August 14, 1640 CE. Sundar Shah's disciples buried their Master's body in accordance with Muslim rites and cremated Bidhi Chand's body in accordance with Sikh rites, and raised shrines in their honour. Some time later, his son, Lal Chand, brought from the site of his shrine at Deonagar some earth over which he built a memorial in his ancestral village, Sur Singh.

Bhai Mani Singh

Bhai Mani Singh was born on March 10, 1644 CE, at Alipur in Muzaffargarh district (now in Pakistan). His father's name was Mai Das and mother's Mudri Bai. Not much is known about his childhood except that his sensibilities were shaped by the environment which was essentially Sikh because of the deep faith of his parents and brothers in Sikhism. According to *Bhat Vahi Talaunda*, Bhai Mani Singh's grandfather, Bhai Ballu, had died in 1634 CE in the battle of Amritsar between the Sikhs and the Mughals. In 1654 CE, he got the chance to have personal contact with the Sikh movement when he was brought by his father to Sri Guru Har Rai at Kiratpur. The Guru's hallowed personality instantly inspired in him deep admiration and devotion.

At the death of Sri Guru Har Rai, Bhai Mani Singh decided to stay on at Kiratpur to serve Sri Guru Harkrishan. According to the author of *Shaheed Bilas*, he was one of the privileged few who accompanied Guru Harkrishan to Delhi.

Bhai *ji* went to Bakala along with Mata Sulakhni, the mother of the eighth Nanak, to hand over the legacy of the predecessor Gurus to the ninth Nanak, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. At that time, Bhai Mani Singh was running the 20th year of his life. He was mature far beyond his age, and his advice mattered. When Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed at Delhi in 1675 CE, Bhai *ji* was at Anandpur Sahib with Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh assigned Bhai *ji* such tasks as involved high degree of responsibility. In 1678 CE Bhai *ji* was asked to prepare copies of *Adi Granth*, the task which was obviously important, as the word of the Guru is precious, and it must be made available to every Sikh to enable him / her to be in tune with it. Thus, at the age of thirty-five, Bhai *ji* emerged as a great scholar, possessing the requisite acumen to

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undertake the important job of preparing copies of *Adi Granth*.

Bhai Mani Singh accompanied Sri Guru Gobind Singh to Nahan in 1687 CE. According to *Shaheed Bilas*, Bhai *ji* was one of the important poets of the Guru's court.

Bhai *ji* had the privilege of accompanying Sri Guru Gobind Singh when he went to Dehradun after the death of Baba Ram Rai to condole with Panjab Kaur, wife of Baba Ram Rai.

In 1691 CE, Sri Guru Gobind Singh appointed him as his *Diwan*, in which capacity he attended to multifarious duties.

All through his long life, Bhai Mani Singh regularly discoursed on the meaning of the hymns of the Gurus. It appears that his method of transmission of words of the Guru was so effective that in the course of time a school of Sikh thought, popularly known as *Giani Sampardai* (Giani School of Thought), emerged. In 1699 CE, on the occasion of creation of the Khalsa, Bhai Mani Singh also received *amrit*-initiation from the *Panj Piaré*. Bhai *ji*'s five sons were also initiated into the order of the Khalsa.

When in 1699 CE, Sri Guru Gobind Singh sent out several batches of Sikhs to preach the Khalsa way, Bhai Mani Singh was commissioned to take charge of Harmandir Sahib.[11] He reached Amritsar accompanied by Gulzar Singh, Bhupat Singh, Kair Singh Chandra, Dan Singh, and Kirat Singh whom the Guru had specially chosen. According to Sukha Singh, the author of *Shaheed Bilas*, Bhai *ji* abolished all anti-*Gurmat* practices that had been introduced in Harmandir Sahib by the rival Sodhis to strengthen their own cause. He stopped circulation of the literature that had been specially prepared by these pretenders to propagate a creed wherein Pirthi Chand, Meharban and Harji were accorded the status of guru.

Mani Singh used to come to Anandpur Sahib off and on along with the *sangat* for guidance and instructions by the tenth Nanak himself. On the eve of the first battle of Anandpur Sahib, Mani Singh was with the Guru and took part in the battle. His sons Bachittar Singh and Udey Singh also fought in this battle. Vir Singh Bal says that the Guru called Bhai *ji*, gave him a sword, shield and arrows, and sent him to the battlefield.[12] In this battle, Bhai *ji*, as also his three sons, showed remarkable valour.

Bhai Mani Singh's sons also participated in the battle at Nirmohgarh when the hill chiefs Bhim Chand and Wazir Chand attacked the Guru. The Guru was pleased at their bravery and valour and honoured them by awarding a *Hukamnama*.[13]

At the time of evacuation of Anandpur Sahib by Sri Guru Gobind Singh in December 1704 CE, Mani Singh followed the Guru. When on the bank of the river Sarsa, the Khalsa was suddenly attacked at night by Mughal forces and all were scattered in different directions. The Guru's mother and his two younger sons went in one direction. The Guru's wives, Mata Sundar Kaur and Mata Sahib Kaur, in the guise of peasant women, were escorted by Bhai Mani Singh to safety in Delhi.

When he got wind of the Guru's station at Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib, he along with the Guru's wives reached there and contributed his best to the process of the re-organisation of the Khalsa as also to making copies of the *Adi Granth* at the instance of the Guru himself.

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Having spent a year and a half at Damdama, the Guru decided to leave for the Deccan to have a meeting with Aurangzeb. Bhai Mani Singh was one of the Sikhs who accompanied the Guru on this journey.

At Baghaur the Guru learnt that the emperor was no more.[14] He changed his programme and turned towards Delhi. He joined the new emperor, Bahadur Shah, at Agra in July 1707 CE. Mata Sundar Kaur remained in Delhi, while Mata Sahib Kaur accompanied him. Bhai Mani Singh remained in attendance upon the Guru.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh passed away at Nanded on October 17, 1708 CE. Bhai Mani Singh was present there. He escorted Mata Sahib Kaur to Delhi where both the Guru's wives lived for the rest of their lives.

Shortly afterwards, Bhai *ji* returned to Amritsar with the specific purpose of further strengthening the organizational mechanism which the Guru had put in place to continue the mission of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. On the Vaisakhi day in 1709 CE, Bhai *ji* convened a large gathering of Sikhs by issuing letters far and wide to apprise them of the latest developments.

After the execution of Baba Banda Singh, Sikhs became divided on the issue of control over Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar. The situation was explosive and could lead to open hostilities between the two groups. Bhai Mani Singh was then in charge of Harmandir Sahib. He was respected by all. He handled the situation tactfully, so that the control remained with the mainstream Sikhs or the *Tat* Khalsa. It was due to Bhai Mani Singh's personality and farsightedness that a major clash in the *Panth* was averted.

The Mughal government of Lahore had issued strict instructions forbidding Sikhs from visiting Amritsar and bathe in the *sarovar*. On all sides of the city, strong contingents were posted to arrest Sikhs approaching Harmandir Sahib.

In October 1734 CE, just before *Diwali*, Bhai Mani Singh applied to the Governor for permission to Sikhs to hold a fair at Amritsar on *Diwali* day for a tribute of rupees five thousand. Permission was granted, but the real object of the government was to destroy the Sikhs *en masse*. Bhai Mani Singh had sent messages all over the Punjab inviting Sikhs to collect at Harmandir Sahib. When, however, he sensed the nefarious designs of the government he cancelled the meet and asked the Sikhs not to come to Amritsar on the *Diwali* day.

No fair was thus held and no offerings came. So, Bhai Mani Singh who had planned to pay five thousand rupees out of the offerings could not do so, nor had he any other source of income to make payment. The government demanded the stipulated fee. Mani Singh blamed the government for not allowing the Sikhs to assemble. The government arrested him in 1734 CE and took him to Lahore. The *qazi* pronounced the judgement that he was to be cut to pieces limb by limb. On the site of his martyrdom in Lahore stood Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj until the partition of Punjab in 1947 CE.

Bhai Mani Singh's achievements in the literary sphere are numerous. To him are attributed two works in prose – *Gian Ratnawali*, an account in traditional style of the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, and *Bhagat Mala*, an illustrative commentary in anecdotal style on Bhai Gurdas' *Var* XI. The author of *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* also claims

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that his work is based upon discourses given by Bhai Mani Singh.

Koir Singh, the author of *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, also acknowledges his huge debt of gratitude to Bhai Mani Singh for vital information on the life of the tenth Guru, which he gathered from his friend who was on security duty in the Lahore jail where Bhai *ji* had been imprisoned.

Bhai Nand Lal

Bhai Nand Lal was one of those blessed Sikhs who had the good fortune of receiving the patronage and guidance of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He was born in 1633 CE at Agra. His father was Diwan Chhajju Ram who, because of his erudite scholarship in Persian and Arabic, was much liked by Dara Shikoh. When Dara was sent to Qandhar to subjugate it, he took Chhajju Ram along, appointing him his chief secretary (*mir munshi*). Dara Shikoh returned to Agra but Chhajju Ram chose to remain at Ghazni working as *mir munshi* of the governor of Ghazni.

Bhai Nand Lal's father made all possible arrangements to ensure good education for the boy. Chhajju Ram himself spared time to give lessons to his son. Shortly, Nand Lal acquired proficiency in Persian and Arabic and could compose verses in Persian at the age of twelve.

Diwan Chhajju Ram was a staunch *Vaishnavite*. Nand Lal was nourished on the religious views of his father. There was another element that entered into his psyche. During those days, the Sikhs all over the subcontinent and Afghanistan had established their *sangats* where they used to pray and discuss spiritual as well as social views of the Gurus. Bhai Nand Lal came into contact with these *sangats* and could not resist the impact of Sikhism.

When Bhai *ji* was sixteen years of age his mother died. Three years later his father also breathed his last. Bhai Nand Lal, as per custom, expected the post of his father to be given to him. He even tried for it but the governor of Ghazni was not willing to oblige him and instead offered him the petty post of a clerk. Bhai *ji* declined the offer because he did not consider this post commensurate with his ability and the status of his family.

Thus finding himself helpless, Nand Lal decided to leave Ghazni. He sold the property which he had inherited and reached Multan along with his two brothers and two loyal Pathan caretakers. He selected Multan for his residence. This was the right choice since Multan was a great centre of trade and possessed great political importance. He built a house there outside Delhi Gate.

Shortly after his arrival at Multan, the fame of the scholarship of Nand Lal began to spread. Nawab Wassaf Khan, much impressed by Bhai *ji*'s integrity and learning, appointed him to the post of *munshi* in which capacity he worked with distinction and won approbation from all quarters.

After this, he was put in charge of the fort at Bhakkar. He collected the arrears of revenue from the *zamindars* of the area and remitted the same to the Multan treasury. Soon after, he was made *nazim* of Dina, Kehror, Fatehpur and Pargana Mohi-ud-Din Pur. He acquitted himself with distinction even at this post. The next post which he

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held was that of *naib subedar* (deputy governor) of Multan. About the period of his deputy governorship, no reliable source throws any light on his performance or achievements in that capacity.

According to *Dastur-ul-Insha*, the book written by Bhai *ji* himself, he, as *nazim*, made his mark as a military general also. He led a punitive expedition against a notorious dacoit, Sahu, who had a seven hundred member group to support him in his nefarious activities. Sahu was arrested and nearly half of his followers were slain.

According to Dr Ganda Singh, Bhai *ji* served the state in different capacities for about thirty years. He also served Prince Muazzam (later known as Bahadur Shah), son of Aurangzeb.

During the regime of Aurangzeb, Bhai *ji* was turned out of government service. The exact reasons for his dismissal are not known, but the conjecture is that he had to quit because of his father's good relations with Dara Shikoh, the fact which was uncondonable for Aurangzeb.

All the same, subsequent period of his life was fruitful to him in another way. He discovered himself. He came into contact with Sri Guru Gobind Singh who wrought a transformation of his psyche. Bhai Nand Lal saw new heights and new horizons. His poetry found new stimuli, and symbolised new ideas. The fulcrum of his activities became Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the beloved protector of the oppressed humanity.

He went to Anandpur Sahib, the seat of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, leaving his family at Multan. He saw for himself the Guru's multifarious activities, operating with finesse to bring about new awakening among the people and endeavouring to shape new values to fit in the general framework of the society of his ideas. His intellect quickened, his sensibility sharpened, his self responded to his generous gestures and he became an ideal Sikh, embodying the Sikh ethos in its totality.

Admiring the Guru's cause, Bhai *ji* decided to stay at the court of the Guru.

In 1695 CE, Bhai *ji* went to Agra where he got the post of *mir munshi* of Prince Muazzam, who had, just after his release from the prison, assumed the charge of *subedar* of the province of Agra. However, Bhai *ji* was not destined to work at this post for long.

It is said that once Aurangzeb asked the interpretation of a certain line from *Al-Quran*. Various interpretations were presented to the emperor, but the version forwarded by Prince Muazzam was considered to be the most appropriate by Aurangzeb. On further probe, he came to know that it was Bhai Nand Lal who had interpreted it. Aurangzeb felt upset because he did not like a *kafir's* mastery over the sacred text. He suggested that such a man of learning should be converted to Islam. In a public *darbar*, Nand Lal was awarded a robe of honour and a cash prize of Rs. 500.

When Aurangzeb's ulterior motive came to Bhai Nand Lal's knowledge, he felt perturbed. There were only two courses left for him. He could either embrace Islam or leave his present position. The former option was rejected by him forthwith because he had, to all intents and purposes, entered the Sikh fold. The second course seemed more practical to him. He at once packed up, begged leave of the Prince and reached

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Lahore. Here he met his pupil, Ghias-ud-Din, the *daroga* of Agra who had come on leave to this place. Both of them reached Anandpur Sahib. Ghias-ud-Din returned to Lahore after some time, but Bhai Nand Lal continued his stay at Anandpur Sahib till 1705 CE.

During this period Bhai Nand Lal drank deep in the fountain of Sikh spiritual thought as enshrined in *Adi Granth*. He listened to the enlightening utterances of the Guru. He keenly observed the Sikh way of life and understood the ultimate goal of the Sikh movement. The inauguration of the order of the Khalsa was also noted by him.

All those things and the splendid personality of Sri Guru Gobind Singh constituted an environment wherein Nand Lal's poetic genius quickened and flowered. Bhai *ji* produced books of Persian poetry. The first book of poetry which he presented to the Guru bore the title '*Bandgi Nama*' which was changed to '*Zindgi Nama*' by Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

When the Mughal forces in combination with the hill forces attacked the Khalsa on the bank of the river Sarsa, Bhai *ji*, as also many other Sikhs, got separated from Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

How he passed the year of 1706 CE, no one knows but this much is certain that in 1707 CE after the death of Aurangzeb, Bhai *ji* went to Prince Muazzam who by this time had occupied the Mughal throne at Agra under the name Bahadur Shah.

Even after occupying the throne, Bahadur Shah was not feeling comfortable because Prince Azam was threatening to overthrow him and was advancing at the head of a force from the Deccan to Delhi. At this critical juncture Bhai Nand Lal approached Sri Guru Gobind Singh for active assistance for Bahadur Shah. Sri Guru Gobind Singh acceded to the request and sent three hundred Sikhs to fight on the side of Bahadur Shah whose right to the throne was considered legitimate. Some scholars are puzzled at this gesture of the Guru, for they cannot find any rationale for Guru's sympathy towards Bahadur Shah whose father was responsible for the death of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and for so much hardship to the Guru himself. But if they keep in view the mission of the Guru and then try to appreciate the policy of the Guru vis-a-vis Bahadur Shah, they would see no contradiction whatsoever. The Guru's mission was to uphold righteousness and to see that crookedness does not flourish. Since Bahadur Shah was not bigoted in his religious policy and was right in his stand, the Guru helped him.

Shortly after, Bahadur Shah had to attend to the revolt of the Kachhwaha Rajputs of Rajputana. When he had just started operations against the Rajputs, he got the news of the open revolt of his brother Kam Bakhsh. He at once marched to square up with him.

All the time, Bhai Nand Lal was with Bahadur Shah. Dhadi Nath Mal writes :

> One Nand Lal was amongst the advisers of this powerful sovereign.
> He persuaded him to discuss the matter with the Guru personally.[15]

Bhai *ji* must have tried his best to influence the emperor vis-a-vis Sikh principles. The emperor's intransigence must have caused disappointment to him. However, he continued to serve the emperor up to the latter's death at Lahore. In 1710 CE when the emperor was given the news of Banda's anti-Mughal campaigns in the Punjab, he

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lost no time in marching towards Punjab. Bhai *ji* was in the emperor's camp and reached Lahore along with the emperor. Bahadur Shah expired in 1712 CE and Bhai *ji* forthwith left for Multan.

After this, Bhai *ji* lived only for a year, but this period of his life by no means lacked activity. He established a school in which he himself imparted higher education in Persian and Arabic. This school continued to serve the people even after his death, and when in 1849 CE Multan came under the occupation of the British, the school was being run by the people of his family. Bhai *ji* expired in 1713 CE.

Bhai Nand Lal wrote ten volumes. As is clear from the diction and thought of these books, it is not difficult to surmise that he wrote under the deep impact of Sri Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikh philosophy. He composed verses under the pen-name of 'Goya' and 'Lal'. Listed below are some of his writings.[16]

ZINDGI NAMA

As explained earlier, this was the first compilation of Bhai *ji*. The subject of this book is love for God and devotion for the Guru. For thoughts and perspective, Bhai *ji* copiously refers to the hymns of the Guru.

GHAZALIAT

This volume is a good attempt to interpret the Guru's compositions. From the point of view of style, thought, and diction this composition is superb.

TOSIFO-SANA AND KHATIMA

Except *Khatima*, which is in poetry, the whole composition is in Persian prose. Its style is marked for its difficult diction. It contains no historical information, and is purely literary in content.

GANJ NAMA

This composition is in prose as well as in poetry. In it one comes across the devotion for the Gurus with which the author seems to be staturated. It is a panegyrical discourse on all the ten Gurus individually.

JOT BIGAS (PERSIAN)

This composition explains at full length the doctrine of Unity in the plurality of the Gurus. The first Guru had categorically rejected the doctrine of incarnation, i.e., the appearance of God on earth in human form, but had studiously advocated by practical illustration the doctrine of blending his spirit with the next and so on. It is in this volume that we find Bhai Nand Lal using epithets such as *Badshah Darvesh* — king saint, *Puran Manukh* — perfect man, etc., for Sri Guru Gobind Singh. This book is a great aid to scholars engaged in the study of the personality of Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

JOT BIGAS (PUNJABI)

This book is not a translation of the former book, although its subject matter and title are almost the same.

RAHITNAMA AND TANKHAHNAMA

According to Sardar Attar Singh of Bhadaur, both these compositions are the creations of Bhai *ji*, although Bhai Kahn Singh does not agree. *Rahitnama* articulates

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the code of discipline to be followed by the Sikhs. It is supposed to have been written on December 4-5, 1695 CE, and hence refers to the code which was required to be observed before the creation of the Khalsa. *Tankhahnama* was written after the creation of the Khalsa and it lists some of the do's and don'ts which the Khalsa should observe in their day-to-day life.

DASTUR-UL-INSHA (PERSIAN PROSE)

The book provides valuable information on social, economic and political conditions contemporaneous to Sri Guru Gobind Singh. It is a collection of letters in Persian prose to Nand Lal's relatives and friends.

ARZ-UL-ALFAZ (PERSIAN POETRY)

It provides abundant information regarding the spiritual currents which Sikhism had caused. In it, Bhai *ji* is profuse in his praise of God and the Gurus. The Persian and Arabic words which Bhai *ji* had used are clear manifestations of Bhai *ji*'s intense devotion for the Guru as also his deep scholarship.

Mai Bhag Kaur

Guru Arjun Dev was a vigorous preacher, besides being a great organiser and a creative genius. It was because of his proselytizing campaigns that most of the Majha people shed their old beliefs and embraced Sikhism. One of them was Langah, son of Abul Khair who was a staunch devotee of Sakhi Sarvar. As chance would have it, his friends happened to be Sikhs under whose influence he visited Amritsar and saw Guru Arjun Dev for himself. The illuminating personality of the Guru wrought transformation of his mind and he entered the fold of Sikhism. By degrees, through his devotion and selfless service, he rose in the estimation of the Guru who began to involve him in the tasks of far-reaching importance for the nascent Sikh community. His brother Pero Shah and his nephew Malo Shah also grew to be devout Sikhs. Malo Shah was much loved by Sri Guru Hargobind.

Mai Bhag Kaur was Malo Shah's daughter and was born at Jhabbal (in present-day district Amritsar). She was brought up in an atmosphere which was suffused with Sikh ethos and culture. Admittedly, Bhag Kaur was imbued with Sikh ideals and her psyche shaped accordingly. She got the chance to have a glimpse of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur when she was taken to Anandpur Sahib by her parents. Again she was lucky enough to be present along with other members of her family on the occasion of 1699 CE when the Khalsa was unveiled at Anandpur Sahib. Her family members were among those who received initiation of the double-edged sword. She was married to Nidhan Singh of Patti.

Immediately after the inauguration of the order of the Khalsa, people on large scale were administered *pahul*. Bhag Kaur also was among them.

In 1701 CE, fighting ensued between the Guru on one side and the hill chiefs and the Mughal government on the other. The hostilities continued up to 1705 CE.

When the news of the excesses of the hill chiefs and the Mughal *subedar* of Sirhind reached the Sikhs of Amritsar they were enraged. The grandsons of Duni Chand,

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Sardar Anup Singh and Sardar Sarup Singh, got ready to participate in the war on behalf of the Guru. Mai Bhag Kaur's brothers too rushed to Anandpur Sahib to render much needed assistance to the Guru. Many more people did the same. Though the enemy had taken precautions to stop the Sikhs from reaching Anandpur Sahib, yet they managed to reach in disguise at great personal risk. Bhag Kaur was a witness to all this.

In 1705 CE, the final battle of Anandpur Sahib took place. The Sikhs fought gallantly. The siege lasted for more than seven months. The strategy of the enemy during the siege was to force the Sikhs to surrender by completely barring their access to food and water. The effects of the strategy began to be felt as the days passed and supplies started dwindling.

The situation deteriorated to the extent that the Sikhs did not have anything to live upon. When the enemy learnt of the distress of the Sikhs, they planned a different strategy to take advantage of the situation. They sent a message to the Guru suggesting that if he decided to abandon Anandpur Sahib, he would be allowed a safe passage. The Guru sensed a trap and did not accept the suggestion. At this some Sikhs persisted that the offer of the enemy should be accepted. When the Guru did not listen to them, some of them disclaimed the Guru and left for their homes.

The Guru, ultimately, had to evacuate Anandpur Sahib on 5-6 December, 1705 CE. The moment the enemy got an inkling of the departure of the Sikhs, they forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit. The Guru suffered a lot but wended his way to Chamkaur where he gave battle to the enemy. In this battle the Guru had only forty odd soldiers while the enemy commaded a force running into many hundreds (according to *Zafarnama*). All the Guru's soldiers, except three suffered martyrdom. Most prominent among the Sikh martyrs were *Sahibzadas* Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh and three of the *Panj Piaré*.

After this, the Guru had to move from place to place for regrouping the Khalsa. While at Dina, the Guru received definite information about the determination of the Sirhind authorities to send another body of troops against him. This news also reached the Majha area of the Punjab. The self-respecting Khalsa was quick to respond. Bhag Kaur told her husband that time had come to prove their commitment to the cause of the Guru. Her husband assured her of his steadfastness and readiness to make any sacrifice in this connection.

Bhag Kaur, greatly heartened at her husband's gesture, drew her sword out of the scabbard, alighted a horse and called upon all those who had love for the Guru's cause to come forward and march to the Malwa region of the Punjab to forestall the nefarious designs of Wazir Khan. Her exhortations were specially directed at those forty persons who had come back to their homes by signing a disclaimer (ਬੇਦਾਵਾ).

Bhag Kaur's call had a magic effect. She led a band of Sikhs to the *Khidrané ki Dhab* where the Guru had planned to give a fight to the Mughal forces. On the way, she was joined by a large number of Sikhs. Some leading men from Lahore who had thought they had some influence in the Mughal *darbar* also joined them.

The party met the Master between Ramiana and Khidrana. The deserters begged

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the Guru's pardon. The leading men from Lahore advised him to give up fighting and make peace with the emperor. They offered to act as negotiators. The Guru spurned their advice saying that it was not possible for him to make peace with tyrants. They acquiesced in quietude, and returned to their homes. The Guru continued his advance to his destination.

The rest of the party headed by Bhag Kaur and Mahan Singh of village Sur Singh Wala followed Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

On reaching Khidrana, they found the tank dry. The Master had for that reason moved on from the place. Bhai Mahan Singh proposed to engage the enemy there and to allow time to the Guru to reach a place of safety. Big white sheets of *khaddar* (hand-woven coarse cotton cloth) were spread on the shrubs so that the enemy might think the Sikhs were encamping there in large numbers. Soon the Mughal army arrived.

The Sikhs under Mai Bhag Kaur and Bhai Mahan Singh bore the brunt of the enemy's attack. All the Sikh soldiers fought with unparalleled courage and strength. The Mughal soldiers did their best to overpower the Sikhs and advance towards the Guru who from high ground was aiming arrows on the enemy commanders. Mai Bhag Kaur's leadership was not only heartening to the soldiers but also indicative of the resurgence of women, which had taken place under the Sikh Gurus and their ideology.

The Sikhs, having exhausted their ammunition and quivers of arrows, were obliged to have recourse to their spears and swords. Small bands advanced, engaged the enemy in hand to hand fights, killed several times their number, until many of them were killed or seriously injured and were incapacitated to carry on the fight. They did not win the battle nor were they fighting for it. Their aim was the vindication of their faith in the Guru's cause and to win over the pleasure of the Guru. All the same, they did succeed in constraining the Mughal forces to retrace their steps to their headquarters.

After the enemy had been repulsed, the Guru came down to the field of battle, and with fatherly affection went about looking for the injured. When he came to Bhai Mahan Singh, the Master found that there was still some life in him. After a while, Bhai Mahan Singh opened his eyes, and seeing the Guru was filled with supreme joy. The Guru asked him if he had any desire to be fulfilled. Bhai Mahan Singh said, "No, True Father ! I have seen you. What more could I desire ? But if we have merited your pardon, then kindly tear off our disclaimer." The Guru at once acceded to his request and remarked, "You have saved the root of Sikhism in the Majha. You and your companions, all forty of you are *muktas*, the saved ones, delivered from the bonds of birth and death for ever." Then the Guru went to the place where Bhag Kaur was lying unconscious. She had not been severely wounded but had fallen down out of utter exhaustion. With a little medical aid she regained consciousness.

The Guru was greatly pleased with Mai Bhag Kaur for what she had done. He got her moved from the battlefield and arranged for her treatment. Soon she recovered completely.

After her recovery, Bhag Kaur chose to join the entourage of the Guru.

Bhag Kaur combined in herself virtues both of a saint and a warrior. She was

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strong in character, firm in faith and unflinching in her determination. In view of these qualities, the Guru allowed her inclusion in the guard of ten Sikhs meant to remain close to the Guru. She used to dress in male attire and remained with the Guru at Talwandi Sabo. She was also in the camp of the Guru when he marched along with Bahadur Shah first to Rajputana and then to the Deccan. She observed for herself the parleys that took place between the Guru and Bahadur Shah and as also when Banda Singh was converted to Sikhism.

After the death of Sri Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded in 1708 CE, Bhag Kaur retired further south. She settled down at Jinwara, eleven kilometres from Bidar in Karnataka, where immersed in meditation she continued to stay for the rest of her life. Her hut in Jinwara has now been converted into Gurdwara Tap Asthan Mai Bhago. At Nanded, too, a hall within the compound of Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib marking the site of her residence is known as Bunga Mai Bhago. As long as she lived, she served the cause of the Guru. Her example was that of a person embodying all the virtues of a good Sikh as also those of an ideal Sikh woman alive to her duties as much as to her rights, believing in perfect gender equality and discarding the common view that woman was primarily an appendage of man. Her performance, both in the battlefield and the sphere of *parchar* speaks volumes about the regenerating process that Sikhism, since its inception, had set in motion. Her achievements were enduring, her character and conduct flawless, her leadership stimulating, her faith unflinching and her demeanour striking. No wonder, she has been a perennial source of inspiration to the Sikhs to keep their head high and dignity aloft.

Pir Budhu Shah

Sri Guru Gobind Singh's personality was as fascinating as his teachings were soul-stirring. He transformed the human race into beings imbibing a tradition of fire and steel, sacrifice and death, ever ready to do anything for the uplift of mankind irrespective of caste, creed, clime or social status. All free thinking persons loved the Guru and admired his teachings. These included people of all religions, castes, and political affiliations. One such person was Pir Budhu Shah, a Muslim saint of Sadhaura in Ambala district (in present-day Haryana province of India). His piety and holiness had made him the cynosure of all people — Hindu or Muslim, rich or poor, old or young. His original name was Badr-ud-Din. He was born on June 13, 1641 CE, and was the scion of a Sayyed family of Sadhaura and enjoyed not only a high religious status by virtue of being one of the descendants of Prophet Muhammad but also held a respectable political position.

He was serene and meditative. His interest lay more in realisation of the self than in surface knowledge or in materialistic things of the world. He studied *Al-Quran* and other religious books of Islam with a penchant for the inner meaning of the message of the Prophet. A man of contemplation as he was, he was not much communicative and was thus misunderstood by the people who began to call him a *Budhu*, meaning stupid — the nickname that stuck to him throughout his life. He never reacted to this

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apparently uncomplimentary nomenclature. On the other hand he engulfed everybody, even those who decried and ridiculed him, with innate love and affection.

As he reached manhood, the reality dawned upon people and they began to call him *pir* in reverence and thus he came to be kbown as Pir Budhu Shah.

He was married to Bibi Nasiran, younger sister of Sayyed Khan, who later became a renowned general of Aurangzeb. He had four sons by her — Muhammad Ashraf, Muhammad Bakhsh, Muhammad Shah and Shah Hussain.

Pir Budhu Shah saw for himself the swing in the religious policy of Shahjahan towards orthodoxy. During the reign of Aurangzeb, it was firmly in the Imperial saddle and, therefore, policies towards non-Muslims, particularly the idol-worshiping Hindus, were palpably fanatical; their temples were demolished; their religious books were burnt; their entry into public service was restricted; rewards were offered for conversion to Islam and punishments awarded for refusal. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was a victim of this fanatical policy of the Mughal government. Unlike many of the Muslim high officials or *mansabdars* who rejoiced at the fanatical policy of Aurangzeb, Pir Budhu Shah's mind was tormented and anguished. His understanding of Islam was at variance with that of the orthodox Muslim *ulema*. He was a devout Muslim but Islam of his conviction did not discriminate between man and man on the grounds of faith and beliefs. His understanding of *jehad* was a crusade against evil and not against the non-Muslims.

When Sri Guru Gobind Singh was at Paonta in Sirmaur state, only 16 kilometres north of Sadhaura, Pir Budhu Shah called upon him. After expressing his grief at the execution of the Guru's father, he conversed with him on matters spiritual and moral. The Pir enquired as to how one could meet God. The Guru replied as night meets day. The Pir quipped that in that case night would disappear. The Guru replied that this is what is desired. When self merges in Him to become a part of the whole, falsehood disappears, only truth remains. Therefore, attempts are to be made to realise self to feel that it is part of the Self. Attachment to family, life, wealth, power, prestige and fame has to be curbed and self-realisation achieved only by conquering ego, resigning completely to the Will of God. An extraordinary calmness descended on Pir Budhu Shah and his face exuded sublime serenity. He could clearly see the greatness of the Guru. One of the most important features of the Guru's activities at Paonta was that he imparted military training to his followers to prepare them to face the challenges from the orthodox Hindu hill chieftains as well as Aurangzeb, who had launched a coercive policy to convert non-Muslims to Islam. He needed trained military personnel to accomplish his mission.

Five Pathan leaders of village Damla in *tehsil* Jagadhari, not far from Paonta, had their own contingents of troops each roughly consisting of one hundred men. As they were unemployed, they approached the Pir to recommend them to the Guru for service. The Pir took them to the Guru who employed them on liberal daily wages. In September 1688 CE, a clash with the hill chiefs led by Fateh Chand of Garhwal was imminent. A few days before the actual battle, four out of the five Pathan leaders deserted the Guru, lured by the promises of the hill chiefs that not only would

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they be paid higher wages but also given permission to plunder the Guru's camp and the city of Paonta. The Guru promptly took measures to offset the setback of their desertion. Pir Budhu Shah too came quickly to know of what had happened.

The perfidy of the Pathans whom he had recommended for employment was too much for the Pir to digest. He made a clarion call to his disciples to meet him. Within no time, they reached Sadhaura. The Pir told them about his dilemma — how a man of God had been betrayed by the Pathans and why he wanted them to support him. Out of his disciples, he selected seven hundred whom he placed under the command of his two sons and two brothers. All of them marched to Paonta and Pir Budhu Shah also accompanied them to join the Guru's camp.

Pir's men fought with dogged determination. In the hard contested battle, Pir's two sons, Sayyed Muhammad Ashraf and Sayyed Muhammad Shah, his brother Bhuré Shah, and many of his followers lost their lives. The Pir's timely help was one of the major causes of the victory of the Guru. The Guru expressed his deepest gratitude to Pir Budhu Shah for his singular contribution at the most critical juncture. He blessed him and as a token thereof, conferred a robe of honour on him and issued a *Hukamnama* to the Sikhs to always honour him and his family.

Pir Budhu Shah bore the loss with calmness and fortitude, but for his wife, Nasiran, it was not easy to resign to the Will of God. Fully aware, the Guru paid a visit to Sadhaura to personally console her. He did his utmost to alleviate her grief and told her that we all should learn to live in the Will of God. The participation of Pir in the battle was a response to his inner conviction that the Guru's cause was righteous and that he was unjustly attacked by the hill chiefs. It did not signify anything else. No politics was involved. And very rightly, the Mughal government did not take any notice of Pir Budhu Shah. Nor did the hill *rajas* become raucous against the Pir, probably because Sadhaura did not fall in their jurisdictions. Sixteen years passed, nothing happened to the Pir who preached his Sufi doctrines freely and successfully blunted the communal and particularistic angularities of fanatic people.

Wazir Khan of Sirhind as well as the fundamentalist Naqshbandis never approved of Budhu Shah's role. Wazir Khan was a sworn enemy of the Guru, and wanted to capture him dead or alive. However, he did not succeed. The Guru, fighting all the way from Anandpur Sahib, reached the safety of Malwa region. This infuriated Wazir Khan. Maddened by anger, he ordered Usman Khan, the *daroga* of Sadhaura, to destroy the Pir and his family. They were killed in cold blood on March 25, 1705 CE.

Bhai Jaita

The Sikh religion up to the time of Sri Guru Gobind Singh had caught the imagination of the masses. The downtrodden section of the people, which is always the biggest one in the feudal social structure, was especially attracted towards it because of its emphasis on ameliorating their condition both at social and economic planes. It can be safely surmised that the people whom the Guru met or about whom he spoke were mostly the poor, the downtrodden and the so-called low caste people. The

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Guru's focus on the uplift and empowerment of these people made them his staunchest supporters.

Recently, an entry discovered in *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* records that Bhai Jaita's father's name was Agya Ram, who was the resident of Mohalla Dilwali Sikhan, Delhi. In view of this evidence, conclusion may be drawn that Bhai Jaita belonged to Delhi and his father was not Sada but some other man, but a little probe into matter will bring into relief the reality. Bhai Agya, after the death of his wife, began to live a life of resignation, becoming self-absorbed and disinterested in the world around. People often unable to penetrate into the real self of the man began to call him 'Sada', a simpleton.

The musician in him urged him to take part in the *kirtan*. Soon he became a musician of Guru *darbar*. Sada Nand found solace and his depression vanished. Now he was in the House of Nanak, where there was freedom from temptations, uncalled-for restrictions and fear. (Sri Guru) Tegh Bahadur contacted Shiv Narain and successfully prevailed upon him to marry his daughter to Sada Nand. The marriage was solemnized in March 1656 at Koil[17] (present day Aligarh) and the couple returned to Kiratpur wherefrom marriage party had gone. Pandit Shiv Narain also came to save himself from the taunts of his caste people.

Sada Nand was much loved by (Sri Guru) Tegh Bahadur, who included him in his entourage which he took along with him on his *parchar* tours in the eastern part of India. *En route*, the Guru stayed for some time at Benares where a son was born to Sada Nand and his wife Lajwanti, renamed as Premo by Mata Nanaki and Mata Gujri. The child was named Jaita.

According to Niranjan Arfi, the date of birth of Jaita was 5th *Sawan*, 1714 BK.[18] Two months after, on the occasion of *Diwali*, Baba Tegh Bahadur and his whole entourage came back to Kiratpur. Sada Nand and his wife paid obeisance to Sri Guru Har Rai and sought his blessings for their son. Sri Guru Har Rai is said to have uttered that Jaita would be a great person, always eager to do good to others, even at the risk of his own life.

Sada Nand's whole life was a saga of his unselfish service to the Guru's cause. He came to Bakala and stayed there singing *Gurbani* and doing other jobs for (Sri Guru) Tegh Bahadur. In 1661 CE, he worked as a preacher at Benares. This duty was assigned to him by Sri Guru Har Rai. Even after the assumption of guruship by Tegh Bahadur, Sada Nand remained with him, serving in various capacities.

According to Dr Fauja Singh, in the *hukamnamas* that Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur addressed to the Sikhs of Patna and Dhaka, the name of Sada Nand is conspicuous.[19] From this it may be inferred that Sada Nand stayed in Patna and other places near about doing *parchar* and organizational work and was considered an eminent Sikh of the Guru.

Jaita, therefore, was lucky enough to pass the early years of his childhood at Benares, Bakala, Chak Nanaki and Patna. He became acquainted not only with Sikh religion but also with other religious dispensations, such as Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Brahminism and cults of different persuasions. His fondness for knowledge being very intense, he soon acquired proficiency in explication of the Guru's compositions. By the age of twelve, Jaita had become a renowned man of letters.

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At Patna he received training in weaponry of different kinds and learnt the art of warfare besides horse-riding, swimming, music and *kirtan*.[20] He became famous for his boldness, strategic skill, organizing capacity and handling of weapons – especially guns. Ratan Bhagwan Singh says, "Jiwan Singh Rangreta was a known *bandookchi* (gunner)." Bhai Santokh Singh, the author of *Suraj Parkash Granth* records : "When Bhai Jiwan Singh (the name which Jaita was given after receiving *pahul*) fired his gun, none could escape his aim. The enemy, therefore, often thought it appropriate not to come in the range of his gun." According to the author of *Gur Katha*, Jaita and his brother Sangat enjoyed the company of child Gobind Rai and were treated as they were of the Guru's family."[21] Mata Gujri, Mata Nanaki, Bhai Kirpal and Bhai Dyala, all showered him with affection.

In 1671 CE, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur started his journey back to Nanaki Chak after undertaking tours to different places in the east of India. Sada Nand and his sons, Jaita and Sangat, were with him. *En route* when they reached Delhi, it seems that Sada Nand decided to settle along with his family at Mohalla Dilwali. Bhai Jaita took to practising the Guru's teachings like his father and soon shot into prominence among the Sikhs. It was at this time that he developed close acquaintance with Lakhi Shah and his family.

Bhai Jaita used to come to Anandpur Sahib off and on to keep himself abreast of the latest instructions of the Guru and when Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested and taken to Delhi, Bhai Jaita came to Anandpur Sahib to pay his homage to Sri Guru Gobind Singh and also to apprise him of the situation and the mindset of the Mughal government. Whether Sri Guru Gobind Singh gave him certain instructions or not, one thing is clear that he went back to Delhi, fully inspired and determined to do his best to serve the cause of the Guru.

The fateful day came on November 11, 1675 CE, and executioner's sword decapitated the Guru. The body and the head lay in front of Kotwali in the Chandni Chowk, which used to be the most crowded place in the city. The plan of the government was to cut the body into four pieces and to quarter them on all sides of Delhi. Bhai Jaita could not withstand all this. Bhai Nanu, another Sikh of Dilwali Gate, felt just like Jaita. Both of them met each other. Bhai Sada Nand also took part in the deliberations. According to *Banswali Nama* and *Bhat Vahis*, Bhai Nanu picked up the head, went home and asked Bhai Jaita to take it to the Guru. Jaita wrapped the head in a piece of cloth, put the head in a basket and covered it with flowers. He, regardless of the danger of the Mughal pursuers and caring little for physical inconvenience, ran towards Anandpur Sahib. He was accompanied by his father and Bhai Nanu. On the way, he stopped at four places, viz., Sonepat, Ambala, Nabha (near Chandigarh) and Kiratpur. At Kiratpur, Sri Guru Gobind Singh received the hallowed head of his father, took it with all reverence to Anandpur Sahib where it was consigned to fire. Sri Guru Gobind Singh was so much moved at the courage and devotion of Bhai Jaita that he took him in his embrace and announced, '*Rangreta Guru ka béta*', i.e., 'The tanner is the son of the Guru'. From then on Bhai Jaita started living at Anandpur

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Sahib. The Guru was all affection for him, and had full faith in him.

Bhai Jaita was married to Bibi Rajkumari, the daughter of Sujan Singh, a Sikh of Patti, who had settled at Anandpur Sahib. It is believed that on the request of the mother of Jaita, the Guru asked the *sangat* to find a suitable match for Jaita. Sujan Singh stood up and offered his daughter in marriage. Accordingly, *Anand* ceremony was performed by the Guru and the couple was blessed. The wedding transcended caste considerations and symbolised union of two souls. According to Shamsher Singh Ashok, Jaita fathered four sons — Gurdial Singh, Gujar Singh, Sukha Singh and Sewa Singh.[12]

Bhai Jaita witnessed variegated activities of Sri Guru Gobind Singh at Paonta and possibly it was here that he became an adept in the art of archery, gunnery, swordsmanship and horsemanship. He also composed heroic poetry, but alas, that is lost for ever.

In the battles of Bhangani, Nadaun and Hussaini (Anandpur Sahib), which the Guru fought, Jaita played his part well. In the battle of Bhangani, he acted as the commander of a unit. Similarly his role was crucial in the battle of Nadaun and in the battle of Hussaini. When the Mughal and hill forces made a joint attack on Anandpur Sahib in 1704-05 CE he was in charge of one of the forts.

On March 29, 1699 CE, when Sri Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Order of the Khalsa, he took *pahul* and was given a new name, Jiwan Singh.[23]

At Anandpur Sahib, there is a building known as Tap Asthan (place of meditation) of Bhai Jaita, very close to Sri Guru Gobind Singh's dwelling place. No other Sikh had his house so near as Bhai Jaita's. This leads us to conclude that Sri Guru Gobind Singh had special regard for Jaita. Tradition says that Bhai Jaita not only used to meditate and reflect on the Guru's word but also gave lessons in Sikhism to people. *Tap Asthan* in Sikh context does not mean a place of an ascetic, rather by this is meant the place where Sikh culture is imbibed and steps are taken to inculcate it among the people.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh evacuated Anandpur Sahib on the night of 6-7 Poh, Samat 1762 BK (5th-6th December, 1705 CE). The moment the enemy got wind of the departure of the Sikhs, they forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit immediately. Skirmishes commenced from Kiratpur onwards. Realizing the impending danger, Sri Guru Gobind Singh gave a band of 50 men to Bhai Udey Singh and charged him with the responsibility of checking the enemy's advance. Bhai Udey Singh fought at Shahi Tibbi with the enemy with a handful of men; all of them perished fighting covering themselves with eternal glory.

When the battle of Shahi Tibbi was in progress, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, along with the rest of the caravan reached the bank of Sarsa river. Bhai Jaita was with the Guru, advancing and planning.

About this time, the news was received that a contingent of enemy troops was fast approaching and was likely to launch an attack in a short time. The river was in spate at that time, and it was apprehended that in the eventuality of an attack from the

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enemy, it would become very difficult to cross it. Under the circumstances, it was considered imperative by the Guru to assign some Sikhs for checking the further advance of the enemy. The choice of the leadership of the *jatha* fell on Bhai Jiwan Singh, who proved himself worthy of the trust reposed in him by the Master. Bhai *ji* and his 100 brave companions offered a stout and stubborn resistance to the enemy and all of them embraced martyrdom. Sarup Singh Kaushish, the author of *Guru kian Sakhian*, records as under :

> A momentous battle was fought on the bank of Sarsa, the arrows of Bhai Jiwan Singh wrought havoc upon the enemy. All the Sikhs fought gallantly with a total disregard for their lives. A large number of the Turks were killed in the battlefield. A hard contest took place between the two parties for one and a half *pahar* (four and a half hours). Then suddenly as a result of a volley of matchlocks, Jiwan Singh was shot in his forehead. His departing words were '*Waheguru ji ki Fateh*'. By sunrise, all the Sikhs had lost their lives.[14]

Makhan Shah

Makhan Shah, son of Naik Dasé Shah, hailed from Tanda in the present-day Muzaffrabad district of Jammu and Kashmir. He was a wealthy trader, and belonged to the tribe of Lobanas[1] who, according to W. Crooke, "acknowledge one God and look on Sri Guru Nanak Dev as the Supreme Teacher."[25]

According to J.H. Hutton,[26] their main profession was supplying and transporting provisions and other necessities of life to far-off places on pack animals, such as oxen and mules, etc., or through boats. Makhan Shah, from his childhood had evinced keen interest in the dispensation of Sri Guru Nanak Dev about which his father often talked.

According to *Bhat Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind*, Sri Guru Har Rai reached Srinagar via Galotian, Sialkot, in 1660 CE, and stayed in Hap Bazaar. Makhan Shah, along with some other Sikhs, came to the Guru to pay obeisance. Among them was Aruré Ram, father of Kirpa Ram Dutt, who later led to the presence of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur a group of Kashmiri *Pandits*, driven to dire distress by State persecution. The Guru blessed Makhan Shah, praising him for diligently following the Sikh discipline on the high road to self-illumination.

Responding to the request of Makhan Shah, the Guru, some time after visiting Mattan and Martand, visited Tanda, to which Makhan Shah belonged, and which had become a centre of Sikh activities. The Guru was pleased to see Makhan Shah, and his dedication to the Sikh way of life.

Makhan Shah was a splendid personality. Stalwart, brawny, broad-shouldered, he had the demeanour of a leader from his appearance, and looked like an aristocrat from his princely robes and dress. Through land, sea, and river routes, his convoys and ships provided provisions to the Mughal army, wherever it would travel for imperialistic exploits. He had a roaring trade and a packed schedule. Even then he could steal time to contemplate on *Sabad* as well as to persuade others to do the same.

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In a way, he acted in his moments of leisure as a missionary of Sikhism.[28]

About 1664 CE, a ship carrying his goods was caught up in a storm. His life and goods were in great danger. So helpless was he that he knelt down and prayed to the Guru for help to safety. He vowed that if by the grace of the Guru, he landed at the nearest port safely, he would make an offering of 101 *muhars* to the Guru.[29]

Makhan Shah's ship steered safely out of the wild storm. He felt overwhelmed by the grace of the Guru. Therefore, the first thing he decided to do was to fulfil his vow. He first went to Delhi[30] where he learnt the news that Sri Guru Harkrishan had passed away. He also came to know that the successor Guru was at Bakala.

He travelled to Bakala with his two sons, Lal Chand and Chandu Lal, and his wife Soliji. He was bewildered to see twenty two persons, each posing as the ninth Guru of the Sikhs. Being a disciple of Guru Har Rai, well-versed in Sikh tradition and history of its leadership, he knew that only one Guru could succeed Sri Guru Harkrishan. So he decided that it would be a mistake to believe them all as the real successors. He, therefore, made up his mind to put them all to test. He decided to offer only two *muhars* to everyone, who posed to be Sri Guru Harkrishan's successor. He was sure that the real Guru would demand the exact amount he had vowed, and that it would not be possible for the impostor gurus to divine the exact purpose of his visit.

Makhan Shah, thus, decided to visit about four or five claimants everyday, make the offering of two *muhars* each, discuss theological problems, and study their response. Makhan Shah, first of all, paid a visit to Dhir Mal, who was then sitting on a raised platform with the original recension of *Adi Granth* on his right side. He bowed before him, placing before him two *muhars*. Dhir Mal blessed him, and offered him a robe of honour.[31] Dhir Mal acted like an inspired prophet as artfully as he could, but his talk in his own praise and his abusive reflections on others convinced Makhan Shah that he could not be the rightful successor.

Makhan Shah visited all the claimants, which convinced him that they were devoid of higher vision of life. Neither their talk nor their demeánour reflected any spirituality or enlightenment. Their hypocrisy, hollowness and pretensions were too glaring to be ignored by a devout and discerning Sikh like Makhan Shah, who was well-disciplined in the true spirit and traditions of Sikhism.

Convinced of the falsity of the pretenders, he enquired if there was any other Baba in Bakala whom he had not met as yet. A lad of fifteen among the crowd came forward, and said that there was one more Baba who kept a low profile, remained absorbed in meditation and was called Baba Tegh Bahadur.[32] This piece of information gave a ray of hope to Makhan Shah as it was coming from an innocent boy of the village, and not from an agent of some impostor.

Makhan Shah forthwith proceeded to the house of Baba Tegh Bahadur. Mata Nanaki greeted him. He bowed reverently and touched her feet. In the courtyard, Makhan Shah recognised Diwan Durgah Mal and Bhai Gurditta, whom he had met at the court of Sri Guru Hari Rai. He then entered the basement where Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur was sitting, resplendent in the joy of supreme enlightenment. Deeply moved,

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but without saying a word, he stepped down, and after placing two *muhars* before the Guru, bowed low in humble reverence. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur gave him his blessings pointing out at the same time that his offering was considerably short of the promised 101. Makhan Shah's heart leapt with joy and he forthwith made good the difference.[33] Bhai Santokh Singh writes :

> He was so delighted ..... his face blossomed like the flower opening up at the sight of the sun. This was like a beggar striking a treasure.[34]

Makhan Shah ran upstairs and began shouting from the roof top, "*Guru Ladho re, Guru Ladho re* !" — I have found the Guru ! I have found the Guru ![35] Sikhs flocked to the house, greatly excited on beholding the true Master.

Makhan Shah's announcement dispirited the impostors, but nothing could assuage the jealousy of Dhir Mal. His *masands* fanned his ambitions. Together, they conspired to harm the Guru, so much so that he was waylaid on the outskirts of the town when he was returning to his house. Muskets were fired but they missed the target.[36] Dhir Mal's men ransacked Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's house. The Guru remained calm and composed.

Makhan Shah and Kirpal (brother of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's wife) attacked Dhir Mal's house in retaliation.[37] They not only recovered the things plundered from the Guru's house, but also carried away some of Dhir Mal's belongings, including the copy of the *Adi Granth* lying with Dhir Mal. Dhir Mal and Shihan were handcuffed. The Guru in his magnanimity forgave them, and ordered the Sikhs to return the articles looted from Dhir Mal's house. The Sikhs returned everything but the copy of *Adi Granth* which they considered to be the property of the Sikhs and not a private belonging of Dhir Mal. Later, when Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur came to know of it, he asked the Sikhs to return the same also forthwith. The Sikhs obeyed and gave the original recension back to Dhir Mal.

Makhan Shah, however, warned Dhir Mal that he should refrain from such tactics in future. Immediately after Dhir Mal left for Kartarpur.

One day Makhan Shah expressed his wish to visit Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, and felt elated when he came to know that the Guru also planned to go there. As they reached Amritsar on *Maghar puranmassi* 1721 BK (22nd November, 1664 CE), the custodians of Harmandir Sahib barred their entry. The Guru encamped at a nearby place, which now a days is called *Thamb Sahib* — the Pillar of Patience. These custodians were followers of Pirthi Chand, his son Meharban and his grandson Harji, and were called Minas. They had installed their own copy of the *Granth* in which not only had they corrupted the compositions of earlier Gurus but included their own as well. They propagated that Sri Guru Arjun Dev was succeeded by Pirthi Chand, Meharban and Harji in that order. They refused to accept Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur as the ninth Guru. They feared that once Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and his disciples entered Harmandir Sahib, they would take control of it, and drive out the Minas and their *masands*, just as they had driven out Dhir Mal from Bakala.

Extremely annoyed at the behaviour of the Minas, Makhan Shah beseeched the

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Guru to allow him to teach them a lesson so that they might not corrupt the Sikh doctrine.[38]

The Guru asked Makhan Shah to keep patience. The Guru uttered :

> Actually they (Minas) live and burn in the flame of greed and lust for wealth. In these flames, they will be scorched and extinguished.
> Their days are numbered. Their misdeeds will bring about their fall.
> A day will come, when they will reap what they are sowing now. No Sikh will allow them to enter the door of his house.[39]

From Amritsar, the Guru journeyed northwards and stopped for the night at the village of Walla in response to the entreaties of a Sikh named Bibi Harian.

Immediately after the Guru left Amritsar the Mina *masands* had to open the doors of Harmandir Sahib under the pressure of womenfolk of Amritsar who displayed courage of conviction by going *en masse* to Harmandir Sahib to protest against the shabby behaviour of Mina *masands* towards Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur. At this juncture, Makhan Shah, who lay in wait for an opportunity to enter Harmandir Sahib and pay his obeisance at the sacred shrine, acted promptly. He admonished Mina priests for showing disrespect to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and for misrepresenting the religion of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. He told them that if they did not mend their ways, they would have to repent bitterly all their lives.

Leaving Walla, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to spend some time touring the Majha and Malwa regions of Punjab. On the occasion of *Vaisakhi* (1765 CE), the Guru reached Dhamtan in the heart of Bangar area which is in fact the extension of Malwa. The Guru reached Kiratpur in May 1765 CE. All the time Makhan Shah was in attendance. He was witness to the laying of foundation of Chak Nanaki by Baba Gurditta, son of Baba Budha, on June 19, 1665 CE, which, in the course of time, grew to be the beautiful town of Anandpur Sahib.

Makhan Shah was uncompromising in his convictions, and vigorous and assertive in executing his plans. He was an inspired Sikh, creative in his vision, always humble before God and the Guru. He spent all his time, money and energy in the labour of love, which under the guidance and inspiration of the Guru, sought to remove the physical, mental, and spiritual hunger of the toiling and suffering humanity. One day, one of his men reminded him that the rainy season was drawing near and it was high time that they attended to the trade commitments. With a heavy heart he asked his men to get ready, and with folded hands he addressed the Guru :

> The rainy season is drawing near. My home is far away. As the streams get flooded, travel will become arduous. May I take my leave, Master ? Pray, do not ever forget this servant of yours.

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur blessed him in these words :

> You have taken refuge in Truth. Ever contemplate the divine Word which shines like a diamond in your soul, and ever live in the peace of your spiritual enlightenment. You are the noblest example of a Sikh, and like a true Sikh, you live in unbroken spiritual communion with the Guru. When you are so deeply and eternally united with me in the realm of the spirit, the temporary separation in the physical world is no separation. You

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have achieved the perfect self-illumination of *nirvan* in the light of which neither joy nor sorrow, neither pleasure nor pain, will ever disturb your peace. You are *jiwan mukt* (the liberated soul).[40]

Makhan Shah fell at the feet of the Guru. Tears rolled down his checks as he left Kiratpur.

After his departure from Chak Nanaki, the recorded history is silent about his activities, although in oral tradition which has come down to us, he had always been a pro-active Sikh ever ready to do anything for the cause of Sikhism. His son, Jiwan Singh, sacrificed his life in the battle of Chamkaur.[41]

Some Eminent Sikhs of the Gurus as Recorded by Bhai Gurdas in Var XI [42]

PAURI 13 (INVENTORY OF THE NAMES OF THE SIKHS OF SRI GURU NANAK DEV)

From the very childhood detached natured Taru, a Sikh of *Popat* clan, was liberated (by Sri Guru Nanak Dev). One Mula of a wonderful nature was there; he would conduct as the servant of the servants of Guru. Pirtha and Kheda of *Soiri* clan also got merged in equipoise because of the shelter at the feet of Guru. Mardana, the bard and witty person, and a good player of *rabab* in assemblies, was a disciple of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Pirthi Mal of *Sehgal* clan and Rama, the devotee of *Didi* clan were of detached nature. Daulat Khan of *Lodhi* clan was a nice person who later on came to be known as living *pir*, the spiritualist. Malo and Manga were two Sikhs who would remain always absorbed in the joy of *Gurbani*, the holy hymns. Kalu, having many wishes and desires in his heart, came to the Guru and under the influence of *Gurbani*, was honoured in the court of the Lord. The wisdom of the Guru, i.e., the *Gurmat*, spread the loving devotion all around.

PAURI 14 (SIKH NAME LISTING)

A devotee named Bhagata of *Ohari* clan and Bhagat of Japu family were two Sikhs who would always go on serving (the Guru). Sihan of *Uppal* clan, and another devotee of *Uppal* clan were very dear to the true Guru. One Bhagirath of Malsihan town was there who earlier was a devotee of Kali, the mythic goddess. Jita of *Randhawa* clan was also a fine Sikh and Bhai Budha whose earlier name was Burha, would remember the Lord with single-minded devotion. Bhai Phirana of *Khaira* clan, Jodha and Jiva always remained absorbed in the service of Guru. One Sikh named Gujjar, blacksmith by profession, was there who would preach Sikhism to the Sikhs of Guru. Dhinga, the barber, serving the Guru got his whole family liberated. Thy *gurmukhs* having sight of the Lord themselves, make others also to have the same glimpse.

PAURI 15 (SIKHS OF THE SECOND GURU)

A Sikh of high achievement, Bhai Paro was there of *Julka* clan, on whom the Guru showered grace. A Sikh named Mallu was very brave and Bhai Kedara was a

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great devotee. I am a sacrifice unto Bhai Dev, Bhai Narayan Das, Bhai Bula and Bhai Dipa. Bhai Lalu, Bhai Durga and Jivanda were gems among the wise men, and all the three were altruists. Jagga was of *Dharani* clan, and Sansaru was one with the Formless Lord. Khanu and Mayya were father and son and Govind of *Bhandari* clan was an appreciator of the meritorious ones. Jodha, the cook, served the Guru, and crossed the ocean of life. The perfect Guru protected their honour.

PAURI 16 (DALLA SANGAT OF THE THIRD GURU)

Pirthi Mal, Tulasa Bhalla and Malhan were devoted to the service of the Guru. Ramu, Dipa, Ugarsain, Nagori would concentrate upon the word of the Guru. Mohan, Roop, Mehta, Amaru and Gopi had eased their sense of ego. To Saharu and Gangu of *Bhalla* clan, and to Bhagu, the devotee, the devotion of the Lord was very dear. Khanu, Chhura, Taru had swum (across the ocean of life). Many courtiers of the Guru's court such as *Mallia*, *Saharu*, *Bhallas* and calico-printers have appeared. Pandha and Bula are known as the singer and scribe of the hymns of the Guru. Grand was the assemblage of Dalla inhabitants.

PAURI 17 (SABHARWAL SIKHS OF THE FOURTH GURU)

Bhai Tirtha was the leader among all the Sikhs of the *Sabharwal* clan. Bhai Puro, Manik Chand and Bisan Das have become foundation of the whole family, i.e., they have got liberated the whole family. Taru, Bharu Das, the Sikhs at the door of the Guru are held as ideals for all the Sikhs. Mahanand is a great man and Bidhi Chand has a pious wisdom. Brahm Das is of *Khota* clan and Dungar Das is known as *Bhalla*. Others are Dipa, Jetha, Tiratha, Saisaru and Bula whose conduct is truthful. Maia, Japa and Naia are known to have come from *Khullar* clan. Tulasa Bohra is known as inspired by the teachings of the Guru. The true Guru alone chisels one and all.

PAURI 18 (SIKHS OF THE FIFTH GURU)

Bhai Puria, Chaudhari Chuhar, Bhai Paira and Durga Das are known for their charitable nature. Bala and Kisna of *Jhingran* clan, and Pandit Rai adore the assemblies of Sikhs. Brave is Tiloka of *Suhar* clan, and Samunda, another Sikh, always remains in attendance of the Guru. Bhai Kulla and Bhai Bhulla of *Jhanjhi* clan, and Bhai Bhagirath of *Soini* clan maintain a truthful conduct. Lalu and Balu are *Vij* clan members, and Haridas remains always happy. Nihalu and Tulsia are forbearing, and Bula Chandia is full of many virtues. Toda, Tota and Maddu from *Mehta* family of Gokha city are contemplators of the word of the Guru. Jhanjhu, Mukand and Kedara perform *kirtan* of *Gurbani* before the Guru. The grandeur of the holy congregation is manifest.

PAURI 19 (OTHER SIKHS OF THE FIFTH GURU)

Gangu is Nau and Rama, Dharma, Uda are brothers belonging to *Sehgal* clan. Bhai Jattu, Bhattu, Banta and Phirana are brothers belonging to *Sud* clan and love each other very much. Bholu, Bhattu and Tiwari give happiness to others and are known as

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the Sikhs of the court of the Guru. Dalla, Bhagi, Japu and Nivala have come to the shelter of the Guru. Mula, Suja of *Dhavan* clan and Chandu of *Chaujhar* clan have served (in the Guru-court). The fishermen Bisanu, Bibara and Sundar presenting themselves before the Guru, have adopted the teachings of the Guru. Great is the grandeur of the holy congregation.

PAURI 20 (LIST OF SIKHS)

Along with Nihala, Jattu, Bhanu and Tiratha of *Chaddha* clan love the Guru very dearly, and they are servants always in attendance of the Guru. Nau and Bhullu are known as sadhus of *Sekhar* clan, and are the Sikhs of good conduct. Jattu of Bhiva clan and the greatman Mula along with his family are the Sikhs of the Guru. Chatur Das and Mula are *Kapur* clansmen, and Haru and Garu belong to *Vij* clan. A Sikh named Phirana is of *Bahal* clan, and Bhai Jetha is a good-hearted liberator of the family. Vissa, Gopi, Tulasia, *et al.*, all belong to *Bhardwaj* clan and always remain with the Guru. Bhaiara and Govind are devotees belonging to *Ghai* clan. They remain at the door of the Guru. The perfect Guru has fetched them across (the ocean of life).

PAURI 21 (SIKHS FROM SULTANPUR)

Bhai Kalu, Chau, Bammi and Bhai Mula love the word of the Guru. Along with Homa, the cotton trader, Gobind of *Ghai* clan was also taken across by the Guru. Bhikkha and Todi both were *Bhatts*, and Dharu Sud had a large mansion. Gurmukh of *Kohli* clan and Ramu along with Nihalu are also serving there. Chhaju was *Bhalla* and Mai Ditta was a humble *sadhu*. Devotee Tulasa is of *Vohra* clan, and I am sacrifice unto Damodar and Akul. Bhana, Vigah Mal and Buddho, the calico-printer, have also come to the court of the Guru. Sultanpur is the warehouse of devotion (and devotees).

PAURI 22 (MASAND SIKHS)

An obedient Sikh named Dipa of *Kasara* clan was like a lamp at the door of the Guru. In the town of Patti, Bhai Lal and Bhai Langah of *Dhillon* clan are well placed. Ajab, Ajaib and Umar belonging to *Sangha* clan are the servants (*masands)* of the Guru. Paira is of *Chhajal* clan, and Kandu belongs to *Sanghar* clan. They meet everybody with smiling face. Kapur Dev, along with his son gets blossomed, when he meets the Sikhs. In Shahbazpur, Saman takes care of the Sikhs. Jodha and Jalan are in Tulaspur, and Mohan lives in Alam Ganj. These big *masands* surpass one another.

PAURI 23 (VERY CLOSE SIKHS)

Bhai Dhesi and Bhai Jodha belong to the *Husang* clan of Brahmins and Bhai Goind and Gola meet with smiling faces. Mohan is said to be *Kuk* clan and Jodha and Jama adorn Dhutta village. Manjh, the blest one and Pirana *et al.* conduct in the will of the Guru. Bhai Hamaja, said to be Jaja, and Bala of *Marvaha* clan, behave delightfully. Nano Ohari is of pure mind and along with him remains Suri, the *chaudhri*. Inhabitants of mountains are Bhai Kala and Mehara and with them Bhai Nihalu also

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serves. Wheatish complexioned Kalu is brave and Ram Das belonging to *Kad* clan is obeyer of the words of the Guru. Rich person Subhaga resides in Chuhania town and with him are Bhag Mal and Ugvanda, the *Arora* clansmen. All these devotees vie with one another.

PAURI 24 (SIKHS OF PUNJAB ONLY)

Paira of *Chandali* clan and Jetha of *Sethi* clan are engaged in service of the Guru. Bhai Latakan, Ghura and Gurditta are fellow students of *Gurmat*. Bhai Katara is a jeweller, and Bhai Bhagwan Das is of devotional nature. Inhabitant of Rohtas village and belonging to *Dhavan* clan, a Sikh named Murari has sought shelter of the Guru. Adit, the brave, belonging to *Soin* clan, and Chuhar and Sain Das also have sought the shelter of the Guru. Along with Nihal, Lala (Lalu) also knows how to merge consciousness in Word. Rama is said to be of *Jhanjhi* clan. Hemu also has adopted the wisdom of the Guru. Jattu Bhandari is a good Sikh and this whole congregation lives in Shahadara (Lahore) happily. Glory of the house of the Guru is manifest in the Punjab.

PAURI 25 (THE SANGAT OF LAHORE - MUZANG)

In Lahore, from the family of *Sodhis*, the elderly uncle (*taia*) Sahari Mal is a close Sikh of the Guru. Sain Ditta of *Jhanjhi* clan and Saido, the *Jat*, meditate on the word of the Guru. From the family of potters Sadhu Mehta is known to be a devotee of the Formless. From among the Patolis, Bhai Lakhu and Bhai Ladha are the altruists. Bhai Kalu and Bhai Nano, both masons, and from among the *Kohlis*, Bhai Hari are grand Sikhs. Kalyana *Sud* is the brave one and Bhanu, the devotee is meditates on the Guru's word. Mula of *Beri* clan, Tirtha and Mukand are also well-known Sikhs. A devotee from Mujang is known by the name of Kisana, and I am sacrifice unto Mangina, the wealthy person. A goldsmith named Nihalu along with his family is ever in attendance of the Guru. Service gives them all comfort.

PAURI 26 (THE SIKHS FROM COUNTRY AND ABROAD)

Bhana Malhan and Rekh Rao, the fellow disciples of the Guru residing in Kabul are well-known. Madho *Sodhi* introduced the Sikh tradition in Kashmir. The truly devoted and close Sikhs are Bhai Bhiva, Sih Chand and Rup Chand (of Sirhind). Bhai Partapu is a brave Sikh and *Vithar* clansman Bhai Nand also serve the Guru. Bhai Sami Das of *Vachher* Clan inspired the congregation of Thanesar towards the house of the Guru. Gopi, a *Mehta* Sikh, is well-known, and Tirath and Natha have also come in the shelter of the Guru. Bhai Bhau, Mokal, Bhai Dhilli and Bhai Mandal have also been initiated into the *Gurmat*. Bhai Jivanda, Bhai Jagasi and Tiloka have served well at Fatehpur. Great is the glory of the true Guru.

PAURI 27 (AGRA CONGREGATION)

Saktu Mehta and Nihalu Chaddha of Agra have been blessed. Bhai Garhial and

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Mathara Das and their families are said to be dyed in the love for the Guru. Ganga belonging to *Sehgal* clan is brave, and Harbans, the hermit, serves in the *dharamsal*, the inn for the pilgrims. Murari of *Anand* clan is a saint of high order, and Kalyana is a house of love and pure like lotus. Bhai Nano, Bhai Latakan and Bind Rao have served the congregation with full commitment and love. Alam Chand Handa, and Sainsara Talvar are the Sikhs who live in happiness. Jagana and Nanda both are *sadhus*, and Bhana of *Suhar* clan is competent like swan to discern the real from false. These disciples of the Guru are like the jewels on a necklace.

PAURI 28 (THE SIKHS IN ATTENDANCE)

Sigaru and Jaita are nice and brave with an altruistic bent of mind. Bhai Jaita, Nanda and Piraga have accepted Word as basic to everything. Tiloka Pathak is the glorious mark who considers holy congregation and its service as benevolent. Tota Mehta is a great man and like *gurmukhs* loves delightful fruit of the Word. The whole of the family of Bhai Sain Das is like invaluable diamonds and jewels. Noble Paira, the *Kohli*, is the store-keeper of the court of the Guru. Mian Jamal is blessed, and Bhagtu is immersed in devotion. The behaviour of the perfect Guru with the Sikhs is also perfect.

PAURI 29 (NAMES OF THE SIKHS OF THE SIXTH GURU)

Ananta and Kuko are good persons, who adorn the occasions. Ita Arora, Naval and Nihalu meditate on the Word. Takhatu is serious and serene, and Dargahu Tuli is always absorbed in remembering the formless Lord. Mansadhar is profound and Tirath Uppal serves all the time. Kisana Jhanjhi and Pammu Puri are also dear to the Guru. Dhingar and Maddu are carpenters and are very noble persons. I am sacrifice unto Banvari and Paras Ram who are experts in paediatrics. The supreme Lord sets right the wrongs done to the devotees.

PAURI 30 (OTHER SIKHS OF THE SIXTH GURU)

Bhai Tiratha is from Laskar and Hari Das Soini belongs to Gwalior. Bhava Dhir comes from Ujjain and is devoted to the Word and the holy congregation. Famous are the Sikhs of Burhanpur who love one another and live in a state of equipoise. Bhaia Bhagvan Das is a devotee, and with him is a Sikh named Bodala, who lives in his home fully detached. Kataru, the noble one, and the physician Pirthimal are especially well-known personalities. Devotee Chhura and Dallu are inhabitants of Rihana (Haryana). Sundar and Swami Das both promote the tradition of Sikhism and live always like a blossomed lotus. Bhikhari, Bhabara and Sulas are Gujarati Sikhs. Loving devotion is their way of life.

PAURI 31 (SIKHS OF THE SIXTH GURU)

In village Suhanda is Bhai Maia of *Lamb* clan who sings the holy hymns in the holy congregation. Chuhar of *Chaujhar* clan from Lucknow is *gurmukh* who remembers Lord day and night. Bhai Bhana of Prayag is a close Sikh who works hard to earn his

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livelihood. Jattu and Tapa, the residents of Jaunpur have served in accordance with *Gurmat* with a stable mind. In Patna, Bhai Naval, and among *Sabharwals* Nihala are pious persons. One wealthy person is known by the name of Jaita who likes nothing except service to the Guru. Of Rajmahal city is Bhanu Bahal whose mind is absorbed in the wisdom of the Guru and the loving devotion. Badali Sodhi and Gopal are rich persons, and understand the *Gurmat*. Sundar Chaddha of Agra and Bhai Mohan, a resident of Dhaka, are ever engaged in service. I am sacrifice unto the holy congregation.

— *S.S.*

Notes and References

1. Kahn Singh, Bhai : *Mahan Kosh*.
2. Taken from the article *Sri Guru Nanak Dev's Life-long Companion – Rababi Mardana* by Satbir Singh.
3. Bhai Gurdas : *Varan*, 1:35
   ਬਾਬਾ ਗਿਆ ਬਗਦਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਹਰ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਆ ਅਸਥਾਨਾ।
   ਇਕ ਬਾਬਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਰੂਪ ਦੂਜਾ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਮਰਦਾਨਾ।
4. Sri Guru Granth Sahib : *Bihagrhé ki Var*, p. 553.
5. Ibid., p. 553.
6. Ibid., p. 553.
7. Gupta, Hari Ram : *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Delhi, reprint 1994, p. 368.
8. Ibid., pp. 153-154.
9. Different historians give different dates of the death of Bhai Gurdas. *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* gives *Samat* 1686 BK (1629 CE). Sant Sampuran Singh gives *Samat* 1687 BK (1630 CE). These dates cannot be accepted because Bhai Gurdas was alive on these dates. *Mahan Kosh* gives *Samat* 1694 BK (1637 CE). This date also needs further research because during this year Guru Hargobind was at Kiratpur while Bhai Gurdas passed away before Guru Sahib went to Kiratpur. We have taken the probable last year of Bhai Gurdas' life as 1631 CE, after the death of Baba Budha. Or he died in early part of the year 1632 CE.
10. Fani, Mohsin : *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*.
11. *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, *Rut* 4, *Ansu* 45.
12. Bal, Vir Singh : *Singh Sagar*, Chapter 11.
13. The *Hukamnama* is in the custody of Giani Garja Singh.
14. According to *Shaheed Bilas* by Sewa Singh, Bhai *ji* returned to Amritsar from Baghaur.
15. Nath Mal, Dhadhi : *Amarnama*, Sikh History Society, Amritsar, 1953. Translation by Gurtej Singh, *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, January 1995, p.92.
16. For greater detail refer to *Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali*, edited by Dr Ganda Singh, p. 12, 1968.
17. Arfi, Niranjan : *Rangretian da Itihas*, Literature House, Putli Ghar, Amritsar, 1993.
18. Ibid.
19. Fauja Singh : *Hukamnamé*, Punjabi University, Patiala.
20. Arfi, Niranjan : op. cit., pp. 238-239.
21. *Gur Katha*, p. 55. This composition has been edited by Dr Gurmukh Singh and published by Raghubir Rachna Parkashan.
22. Ashok, Shamsher Singh : *Mazhabi Sikhan da Itihas*, p. 151.
23. Ibid, p. 71.
24. ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੇਟਾ ਆਗਿਆ ਕਾ, ਪੋਤਾ ਦੁਲੂ ਕਾ, ਬਾਸੀ ਦਿੱਲੀ, ਮਹਲਾ ਦਿਲਵਾਲੀ ਸੋ ਸਿੱਖੋਂ ਕੋ ਗ਼ੈਲ ਲੈ ਸੰਬਤ ਸਤ੍ਰਾ ਸੈ ਬਾਸਠ ਪਖੇ

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ਮਾਸੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਦੂਜ ਵੀਰਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁੰ, ਸਰਸਾ ਨਦੀ ਦੇ ਤੀਰ ਰਾਜਾ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਚੰਦ ਬੇਟਾ ਭੀਮ ਚੰਦ ਕਾ, ਪੋਤਾ ਦੀਪ ਚੰਦ ਕਾ, ਪੜਪੋਤਾ ਤਾਰਾ ਚੰਦ ਕਾ, ਬੰਸ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਚੰਦ, ਚੰਦੇਲ ਗੋਤਰ ਰਾਣੈ ਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਗੈਲ ਦਸ ਘਰੀਆਂ ਜੁਝ ਕੇ ਸਾਮ੍ਹੇ ਮਾਥੇ ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤ ਪਾਈ। ਆਗੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਭਾਣੇ ਦਾ ਖੀਵੰਦ, ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਜਾਣੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਣਾ ਜਨਮ ਸਉਰੇਗਾ।

25. Rose, H.A. : *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North Western Frontier Province*, Vol. III, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1970 (reprint). "The term Lubana has been derived from Lavan, a Sanskrit word which means salt." According to Crooke, "Lubana tribe of Banjaras took their name from the business of carting salt (*lavan*)." *Tribes and Castes of North Western India*, Vol. I, Cosmo Publications, Delhi, 1974 (reprint).
26. Crooke, W. : *Tribes and Castes of North Western India*, Vol. I, p. 154.
27. Hutton, J.H. : *Tribes and Castes of North Western India*, p. 21, 1896 CE.
28. It is perhaps because of this that a Sikh wrote that Makhan Shah was a *masand* incharge of some part of Gujarat region of this subcontinent.
29. *Guru kian Sakhian* mentions 101 gold *muhars*. *Bhat Vahi Tomar Binjlaunton ki* gives the same figure. However, popular tradition refers to 500 *muhars*. Gian Singh and Gulab Singh aver that Makhan Shah had vowed 1000 *muhars*. All records, however, are unanimous in saying that Makhan Shah got into difficulty while traversing trade-routes.
30. Sukha Singh : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, p. 11.
31. Bhalla, Sarup Das : *Mehma Parkash*.
    Le Puja Khushi Sikh ko kini,
    Siro pao Pagdi Tis dini.
32. Sukha Singh : *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1989, p. 8.
33. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
34. Santokh Singh : *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, Vol. X, p. 4003.
35. Ibid.
36. There is a difference of opinion on this point. The author of *Suraj Parkash* mentions that the bullet caused the injury to the head, while Gian Singh in his *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* writes that the bullet did not cause any injury to the Guru, but killed a disciple, who was standing beside him. Some other accounts refer to shoulder injury. Anyhow, the injury does not seem to have been serious as the Guru soon after left for Amritsar.
37. Sukha Singh : op. cit., p. 11.
    Also see, *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, *Ras* 11, *Ansu* 18.
38. *Suraj Parkash*, *Ras* 11, *Ansu* 21.
39. Ibid., *Ras* 11, *Ansu* 22.
40. Ibid., *Ras* 11, *Ansu* 28. Translated by Trilochan Singh in his book, *Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur*, published by Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Delhi.
41. Kaushish, Sarup Singh : *Guru kian Sakhian*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar.
    ਜਵੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੇਟਾ ਮਖਣ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਕਾ ਪੋਤਾ ਦਾਸੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਕਾ ਪੜਪੋਤਾ ਬਨੇ ਕਾ ਉਲਾਦ ਬਹੋਣ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਪੇਲੀਆ ਗੋਤ੍ਰਾ ਬਨਜਾਰਾ। ਬਾਸੀ ਟਾਂਡਾ ਪੁਹਾਂਨਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਮਜਫਰਾਬਾਦ ਦੇਸ਼।
42. Based on translation by Dr Jodh Singh of Punjabi University, Patiala.

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PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF EARLY SIKH HISTORY
— GURU PERIOD —

Contemporary Sources — Gurmukhi & Punjabi

1. Sri Guru Granth Sahib

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Sikhs was compiled by Sri Guru Arjun Dev in 1604 CE. It contained hymns of the first five Gurus, *bhagats* like Jaidev, Namdev, and other men of God like Bhai Mardana and Baba Sundar. The hymns of the ninth Guru were added subsequently. According to I.B. Banerjee, in Sri Guru Granth Sahib "the collection of the hymns of Kabir is older than most of the other anthologies that have come down to us."

Like the Bible, *Rig Veda* and the *Quran*, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is an important source of information regarding the life and culture of its times. Though its contents are mainly religious in nature, yet it throws a flood of light on social, economic and religious conditions of the 15th and 16th centuries. Some of the hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev refer to Babar's invasions and their impact on the common man of those days. It also refers to the first battle of Panipat wherein Pathans were defeated and Mughal rule was established in India.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib also castigates the predominance of the Brahmin in the caste-ridden Hindu society. The daily life of the period has been described in numerous metaphors and similes. Various religious denominations and their customs have also been discussed. For instance, the customs and practices of several ascetic sects of Jogis and Siddhas, Jain *munis* and Buddhist monks, Saivites and Vaishnavites may be found in their rebuttal. At places, there are references to the old *raags* and their popular folk lore, e.g., ballad of Raja Tunda Asraja, etc., in the *Asa Raag*.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is also an important source of information on the lives of Sikh Gurus. Several hymns refer to the various events of their lives. For instance, Sri Guru Ram Das has given the account of the travels of Sri Guru Amar Das in a hymn in *Tukhari Raag*.

2. Hukamnamas

Hukamnama is a combination of two words – *Hukam*, which means 'directive' or

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'command' and *Nama*, which means 'letter'. It, therefore, means a written command, an edict or a mandatory epistle. A letter issued by the Guru is termed by the Sikhs as a *hukamnama* because it contained the Guru's order. The *hukamnamas* are mostly addressed to the *sangats* of different places, usually asking them to perform particular tasks. Often names of some of the prominent Sikhs of the locality, are also given.

The extant *hukamnamas* were written by Sri Guru Hargobind, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, Mata Sundar Kaur, wife of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, and Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. The letters of Sri Guru Gobind Singh are mostly dated, and throw a flood of light on the condition of the times in which these were written. In some of the letters we find the Guru's autograph also as testimony of their genuineness.

Among the few contemporary sources and vast assemblage of the traditions about the early Sikh history (history of the Guru-period), the *hukamnamas* are amongst the most important and authentic sources of information. Like the inscribed edicts or the 'Sermons in Stone' of Emperor Ashoka, the edicts of the Gurus are very helpful in the writing of the history of Sikh Gurus, especially the later part of the life of Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

3. BACHITTAR NATAK

Bachittar Natak is a metrical composition divided into fourteen chapters written in archaic Hindi with large admixture of Sanskrit. It begins with invocation to God, and reproduces legends from current Hindu mythology. At the end of the fifth chapter is described the death of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Seventh chapter gives an embellished account of the early life of Sri Guru Gobind Singh from Patna city where he was born to Paonta Sahib in the present-day district of Nahan (in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh), where he stayed for some time on the bank of the river Jamuna. The subsequent chapters give a detailed account of the two battles the Sikhs fought at Bhangani and Nadaun. The later portion is highly important in so far as it gives the Guru's relations with the *rajas* or chiefs of the neighbouring hill areas.

4. VARAN OF BHAI GURDAS

Bhai Gurdas was a nephew of Sri Guru Amar Das. He died during the guruship of Sri Guru Hargobind, the sixth Nanak. He served as scribe for the fifth Nanak during the compilation of *Adi Granth*. He was the first writer on Sikhism and his writings are held in high esteem, next only to Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Bhai Gurdas wrote *Kabits* and *Swaiyyé* also which are of philosophical nature and give exposition of the Sikh ideals. His long poems (*varan*) contain very significant historical material.

In the first and the eleventh *vars* of Bhai Gurdas we find a lot of historical information. In the first *var* he depicts the life and travels of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. In the eleventh *var* are given the names of various Sikhs. It seems the criterion followed in mentioning the names was their steadfastness in following the Sikh way of life. The names mentioned are of the Sikhs of the times of the first six Gurus. The names of clans to which the Sikhs belonged and places where they lived give a lot of

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information about the spread of Sikhism and the centres of Sikh faith.

5. GURSOBHA

Gursobha is another indispensable source for the life history of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. While *Bachittar Natak* relates to his early life, *Gursobha* covers his later life. *Gursobha*'s author is Sainapat, who was a court poet of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. As stated therein, it was compiled in 1741 CE (*Sammat* 1798 BK).

Gursobha is a metrical history highlighting the events after the creation of the Khalsa in 1699 CE, and ends with the death of the last Guru. It is the only contemporary and authentic source of information for the last phase of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's life. It gives, *inter alia*, a graphic account of the Guru's sending of the *Zafarnama* to Aurangzeb.

Secondary Sources

1. JANAMSAKHIS

Janamsakhi is a traditional biographical account of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. There are different versions of *Janamsakhis*, but the following are the most important :

a) *Puratan Janamsakhi* : It is considered the oldest version of Sri Guru Nanak Dev's tradition. It is also called *Vilayatwali Janamsakhi* as the original manuscript was taken to England by the British and remains there.

b) *Meharban's Janamsakhi* : It was written by Meharban, son of Pirthi Chand. It seems that the motive behind writing this *Janamsakhi* was not altogether altruistic.

c) *Bhai Bala's Janamsakhi* : It is the most popular *janamsakhi* because of its having been most easily available in the ninteenth century. It is claimed to have been written by Bhai Bala, a life long companion of Sri Guru Nanak. The claim is, however, questionable.

d) *Bhai Mani Singh's Janamsakhi* : It is believed to have been written by Bhai Mani Singh one of the most learned Sikhs of the early 18th century.

Dr W. H. McLeod's assertion that the *janamsakhis* do not constitute a reliable source of history, is not tenable. Based on the contemporary traditions these *janamsakhis* provide very valuable information relating to the life of the founder of Sikhism. Some of the facts like birthplace, year, travels and their details are available only in the *janamsakhis* or in the *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas. Most of the historical incidents listed in the *janamsakhis* are corroborated either by local traditions still prevalent in the areas mentioned, or by accounts of contemporary incidents, details of which match some details given in *janamsakhis*.

2. BANSAWALI NAMA

The author of *Bansawali Nama Dasan Patshahian ka*, Kesar Singh Chhibbar, was a Sikh of Baba Banda Singh's time and had first hand knowledge of some of the events. The book was compiled in 1769 CE. He has repeatedly stated that before his demise Sri Guru Gobind Singh conferred guruship on *Guru Granth* and Khalsa. The main subject of the book is to give dates and events connected with the ten Gurus. Most

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of the dates of events quoted in the book differ widely from the dates accepted by histroians, hence they are controversial. A few of these dates, however, agree with dates given by other sources.

The author seems to have rather poor understanding of the Sikh philosophy. An example of this is his linking of the martyrdom of Sikh Gurus with their previous birth which is totally unwarranted. He has stated that Anand was the son of Sri Guru Amar Das, the third Nanak and Mohan was his grandson, which is totally incorrect. His preference for Brahmins is against the basic tenets of Sikhism as the Sikh Gurus never recognised caste distinctions.

The book may be used with utmost caution and only for corroboration of statements made in other more reliable works, as its accounts of historical events, especially concerning their chronology, are not very reliable.

3. GURBILAS PATSHAHI DASVIN

As the very name indicates, it deals with the life of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. The author of this metrical account of the Guru's life is Bhai Sukha Singh, who was an inhabitant of Anandpur Sahib where the Guru lived for a number of years. The work was completed in 1854 BK, i.e., 1797 CE. Though it is written about a century after the creation of the Khalsa, yet it records valuable information on the life of the last Guru.

4. MEHMA PARKASH VARTAK

This work is preserved at Khalsa College Amritsar in manuscript form. The preserved manuscript is a copy of the manuscript discovered by Akali Kaur Singh. There is a general consensus amongst historians that its author is Bawa Kirpal Singh.

Mehma Parkash Vartak is devoted to the lives of ten Gurus. Anecdotes on Sri Guru Nanak and Sri Guru Gobind Singh are in large numbers.

The entire structure of *Mehma Parkash* is not based on any evolutionary principle. Every *Sakhi* has got its own individuality. However, Sikh Gurus' account has been given in chronological order. The maximum number of *Sakhis* relate to Sri Guru Gobind Singh and most of them are didactical in nature.

Its influence is traceable in the *Parchian Bhai Sewa Das* especially in the last portion and also *Mehma Parkash Kavita* of Sarup Das Bhalla. Both the works were compiled in the 18th century. It has striking similarities to *Mehma Parkash Kavita*. It is an important work for compiling the life accounts of the Sikh Gurus.

5. MEHMA PARKASH KAVITA

It was compiled in 1776 CE by Sarup Das Bhalla, a scion of the Bhalla clan to which Sri Guru Amar Das belonged before he became a Sikh. The compilation, which was started at Benares and completed in Amritsar, gives a biographical account of the ten Sikh Gurus. Sri Guru Nanak's life is dealt with in greater detail. The biographical details of the Gurus are given in a chronological order. The author was apparently very well-versed in the traditions connected with the Guru's house.

6. PARCHIAN SEWA DAS

Parchi means a brief note. This work is thus a collection of episodes from the lives of the Gurus briefly recorded by the author. The first eight *sakhis* relate to the

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first eight Gurus, and the next four *sakhis* to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, while the last thirty-eight to Sri Guru Gobind Singh. There are fifty *sakhis* in all. Its author, Sewa Das, was a contemporary of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, and his great admirer. Its English version has been compiled by Kharak Singh and Gurtej Singh and published by the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh in 1995.

7. SAKHI POTHI

It gives an account of the travels of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and Sri Guru Gobind Singh in the Malwa region (cis-Satluj territory). Its author is not known, but it appears from the language used that he belonged to the cis-Satluj area. It is an important work for delineating the travels of the Gurus. It was translated into English by Sir Attar Singh of Bhadaur, and its English version was published in 1876 CE.

It contains one hundred and twenty *sakhis* out of which the first thirty-eight *sakhis* relate to the travels of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur and the rest to Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

8. GURPARTAP SURAJ GRANTH

It is the most voluminous work on the life of the ten Sikh Gurus written in Braj verse by Bhai Santokh Singh under the patronage of Bhai Udhé Singh, the Sikh ruler of Kaithal State. Completed in 1843 CE, and popularly known as *Suraj Parkash* it gives a biographical account of the nine Gurus (from Sri Guru Angad Dev to Sri Guru Gobind Singh). It has been divided into twelve sections (*ras*) corresponding to the signs of zodiac. However, the life of Sri Guru Gobind Singh is presented in greater detail and covers six chapters (*ruts*), corresponding to six Indian seasons and in two *ains* — ascending and descending nodes. *Suraj Parkash* has a total of 1152 chapters.

Suraj Parkash is a work of unique historical importance. The author has collected all the Sikh traditions about the Gurus in this monumental work. From the literary point of view it is a beautiful epic in Braj language. It bears testimony to the author's great scholarship in Sanskrit and his insight into Hindu mythology and *Puranic* literature. It is believed that the author was advised by his Brahmin friends to write the lives of the Gurus in the *Puranic* style in order to make his work more popular.

From the historical point of view *Suraj Parkash* can hardly be considered as a first rate source of information, since it was compiled two to three hundred years after the actual happenings. The historical value of this work would have been enhanced to a considerable degree had the author also recorded his sources of information. Keeping in view the paucity of sources for early Sikh history it maybe considered amongst the main sources of information.

9. NANAK PARKASH

It was completed by Bhai Santokh Singh in 1823 CE, and has one hundred and thirty chapters. The entire work has been based on the *janamsakhi* of Bhai Bala, and covers the life of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.

Contemporary Sources : Persian

1. DABISTAN-I-MAZAHIB

Dabistan-i-Mazahib, "School of Religious Doctrine" or more popularly known as

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"school of manners", first came to light in 1787 CE. This manuscript was brought into prominence by Sir William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta (Kolkata). Since that time it has been considered as the only independent contemporary source of early Sikh history.

The author describes some major religions, viz., Magians, Hindus, Nazareans and Muslims, besides a dozen minor sects. His description is impartial, and he chose the best means for getting the required information. He was in correspondence with Sri Guru Hargobind, during the first half of the 17th century, as is clear from the following passage :

> Sri Guru Hargobind in his letter to the chronicler refers to himself by the title of Nanak who is the spiritual head of this sect. He (chronicler) saw him at Kiratpur in the year one thousand and fifty-three Hijri (1643-44 CE).

Dabistan has got great importance in the sources of early Sikh history. Amid numerous legends about the Gurus and contradictory accounts of Muslim writers, *Dabistan* stands out most prominently as an independent and impartial contemporary account of Sri Guru Hargobind and Sri Guru Har Rai.

Unity of God has been one of the most important features of the Sikh movement. The author of *Dabistan* writes :

> In short, the disciples of Nanak condemn idol worship. Their belief is that all their Gurus are Nanak as had been said. They do not recite *mantras* of Hindus. They do not venerate their temples or idols nor do they esteem their *avtaars*. They have no regard for Sanskrit, which according to Hindus is the language of angels.
>
> During the time of each *Mahal* (Guru), the number of Sikhs increased till in the reign of Sri Guru Arjun Mal they became numerous and there are not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs are not to be found.

2. *AKBAR NAMA / HISTORY OF AKBAR BY ABUL FAZAL (1551-1602 CE)*

Abul Fazal was the son of Sheikh Mubarak and the younger brother of another court poet Faizi. Abul Fazal was one of the greatest men of letters of his age. His *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbar Nama* are the greatest sources of information for writing the history of Akbar, the Mughal emperor. No history of Akbar's time is complete without reference to the works of Abul Fazal.

Abul Fazal was the contemporary of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, and he has narrated the history of Akbar up to 1602 CE when he was murdered. Abul Fazal is considered the official historian of Akbar's reign and he has mentioned the visit of Akbar to Sri Guru Arjun Dev at Goindwal in the third part of *Akbar Nama* :

> On the thirteenth of the month of *Azar* (i.e., Nov. 24, 1598 CE). His Majesty crossed the river Beas near Goindwal and the victorious army crossed by the bridge. On that day the sanctuary of Sri Guru Arjun Dev was freshly illuminated by the Imperial Presence. Through generations past, he (Sri Guru Arjun Dev) was a religious leader and he had abundant discipleship. Since his desire was actuated by sincerity, it was accepted.

3. *TUZAK-I-JEHANGIRI*

The oldest copy of the work is preserved in the Oriental Khuda Baksh Library, at

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Bankipore, Patna.

Tuzak-i-Jehangiri is an important source for writing the history of the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, who was contemporary of Jehangir. About the martyrdom, Jehangir writes :

> In Goindwal, which is situated on the bank of the river Beas, there was a Hindu named Arjun, who accounted himself in the guise of a *faqir* or a religious head, so much so that he had duped many of the simpletons among Hindus and even unsophisticated and stupid Muslims into his own way of living and worship and had widely proclaimed his religious and temporal headship.
>
> He was called a Guru and from all directions mendicants and beggars flocked to him, expressing deepest faith in him. From three or four generations past this religious game of the Guru was in vogue. For a long time past the idea was lurking in my mind that either this false traffic be stopped/abolished forthwith or he should be brought into the fold of Islam. During the days when Khurram was passing from that route, the vain person intended to seek his presence and went to Khurram on the place where he had encamped. He presented many a personal effects to him and drew a mark called *qashqa* (or *tilak*) on his forehead with his finger dipped in saffron, which is considered a good omen among Hindus. When this affair was brought to my hearing, I fully understood the nature of his falsehood. I ordered that he should be brought in my presence, and I entrusted his houses and buildings and sons to Murtza Khan, and after confiscating his belongings and property I ordered that he should be punished in imprisonment and executed according to *yasa* code.

4. *KHULASAT-UT-TWARIKH BY SUJAN RAI OF BATALA*

Khulasat-ut-Twarikh is chiefly a history of Delhi wherein the narratives of all its *rajas* and sultans have been recorded from the very beginning of its mythic foundations, i.e., from the epic king Yudhishtar up till the period when this book was written. Other monarchs have also been dealt with at the time of their final absorption in the Mughal empire. It is written in elegant Persian.

As the author belonged to the Punjab, he was greatly impressed by the Sikh movement and gives some valuable information about the Sikhs and the Sikh Gurus. The following extracts will reveal the importance of this book as a source of Sikh history. While describing the history of Lahore province he gives a brief account of the Sikhs as follows :

> After travelling in all directions of the world he (Sri Guru Nanak Dev), reached Batala and got himself married there and began to live in one of the villages of Batala on the bank of the river Ravi. The fame of his godliness and effectual speech spread far and wide. Numerous people from various countries came and became his disciples. One of his companions was Mardana, the musician who used to sing the verses of his divine master in charming manner and bring the people in the circle of faith.

There is also a reference to Akbar's visit to Sri Guru Arjun Dev :

> On his departure from there, he crossed the river Beas and visited the residence of Sri Guru Arjun Dev, a successor of Baba Nanak who was well known for his knowledge

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> and realisation of God. His Majesty was very much pleased to meet him (Sri Guru Arjun Dev) and to hear from his mouth the vernacular compositions of Baba Nanak regarding the knowledge of God. Sri Guru Arjun Dev considered it (the royal visit) an honour done to him and made a suitable present (to His Majesty) and represented that with the arrival of the royal armies in the Punjab the prices of grain had gone up with consequent increase in the taxes of the *parganas* but then with the departure of the victorious armies the food grains had become cheap and the *ryots* were unable to pay the taxes. On hearing his representation, the chief *diwans* were ordered to allow to the people a reduction of ten to twelve per cent in the taxes, with instructions to the *amils* to give this concession to the people and not to demand anything more.

5. *MUNTKHAB-UL-LUBAB (1722 CE) BY KHAFI KHAN*

This is the history of the Mughals from the very beginning to the early years of the reign of Muhammad Shah.

Khafi Khan has described the rise of the Sikhs under Banda Singh and he has furnished great details, though in the abusive language often used for Sikhs in those days. A careful study of the writings of Khafi Khan will yield valuable details and information about the Sikhs. About the early Sikh history, i.e., 1469-1708 CE, Khafi Khan has not written much about the Sikh Gurus, except the following few lines :

> Their leader under the guise of a *faqir* (recluse) had adopted his residence and headquarters near Lahore. From times bygone temples had been erected in all the famous cities and townships where he had appointed deputies from among his disciples to act on his behalf. It was laid down that whoever from amongst the adherents of the Guru of that misguided sect (the majority of which belonged to the *Jat* and *Khatri* castes of the Punjab and also other low castes of the infidels), brings any offerings by way of holy presents to be offered in the holy sanctuary in the name of the Guru, that deputy should take and collect all that, and after deducting the expenses of his maintenance and other accessories, was bound to convey the remainder to the Guru without any misappropriation.

6. *ZAFARNAMA / LETTER OF VICTORY BY SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH*

In 1763 *Sammat*, i.e., 1706 CE, Sri Guru Gobind Singh wrote a letter to Aurangzeb which is popularly known as *Zafarnama*. Bhai Daya Singh carried the letter to Aurangzeb who was in Deccan at the time.

After the battle of Anandpur Sahib and Chamkaur Sahib, Sri Guru Gobind Singh came to the place which presently goes by the name of Dayalpur in Nabha State (now district Patiala). When the Guru visited that place it belonged to the Kangar village which has been referred to by Sri Guru Gobind Singh in his *Zafarnama*.

At the place where the Guru wrote his letter, a gurdwara was erected on the behest of Bhai Mani Singh, and that gurdwara is called *Zafarnama Sahib* and a piece of land had been donated to the gurdwara by the erstwhile Nabha State.

Zafarnama has two parts — *Dastan* and *Hikayat*. There is enough evidence to suggest that *Hikayat* is a later interpolation. Also *Hikayat* has no direct bearing on the contents of *Dastan*. *Dastan* is one of the important sources of information on the later

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life of Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

In *Zafarnama*, Sri Guru Gobind Singh has written to Aurangzeb about the treachery of his governor who attacked the Guru, breaking his own oaths. The Guru informs that he had forty followers to face the host of the Mughal army :

> What can hunger-stricken forty persons do when they are attacked by an army of ten *lakhs*. Those promise-breakers swooped upon us and attacked with sword, arrow and gun.

The Guru also informs us that he had been forced to wage war against the Mughal army :

> Forced by the circumstances, I came forward and resorted to the use of arrow and gun. When all other means have failed, it is lawful to have a last resort to the sword.

The Guru describes the Mughal army in the following lines :

> In black uniform they came like flies and all at once they began to make hue and cry.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh describes the battle of Chamkaur in the following lines :

> Whosoever came out of the shelter, was drowned in blood even with a single arrow. When I found that Nahar Khan had come to the battlefield he was struck with an arrow without any delay. What can be expected in the battlefield when forty persons are attacked by a countless number ?

Sri Guru Gobind Singh admonishes Aurangzeb :

> You should recognise God and not injure others on the advice of somebody.

The Guru declares his firm faith in God and intimates Aurangzeb that he was not afraid of his kingly powers :

> If you look at your army and wealth, my refuge is God's contentment. If you are proud of country and wealth then my shelter is God.

7. *AHKAM-I-ALAMGIRI*

Ahkam-i-Alamgiri is an important source of information on Aurangzeb's reign, and is a significant document for the study of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's last phase of life. It was written by Inayatullah Khan, son of Shakarullah Khan Kashmiri. He had been a news-writer in the reign of Aurangzeb. According to author of *Maathir-ul-Umra* he had an agreeable disposition and was known for his respect for *faqirs*. He compiled the orders which were issued through him and gave them the name *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*.

The following are a few important extracts from *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri* which have been translated into English by the writer of these lines :

> Report was received. It was concerning Gobind the Nanak-worshipper, coming down twelve *kos* from Sirhind; and sending of reinforcement of seven hundred horsemen with arsenal to besiege the Guru in the *haveli* of Chamkaur; and killing of his two sons and his other companions; and arrest of one of his sons along with his mother.
>
> When this report throwing light on these matters was seen by the exalted Majesty he gave detailed instructions to Mirza Yar Beg. Details of that subject have not been received.
>
> With the order of the world-conquerer King, it was recorded that after receiving the

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letter of Gobind Rai, worshipper of Nanak, containing his intention of seeing His Majesty, the King, and the request with which he had sent his *vakil*, with generosity and kindness of exalted King, pleased to issue an order that Mohammad Beg *gurzbardar* and Sheikh Yar Mohammad *mansabdar* be appointed to deliver the royal order to Wazir Munim Khan. The revered Khan was ordered by the exalted King that he should persuade him (Sri Guru Gobind Singh) and invite him to his presence. After giving the orders to Khan's trusted persons, the *gurzbardar* and the *mansabdar* may return to the King.

Whichever place in the neighbourhood of Sirhind Gobind (Sri Guru Gobind Singh) reaches, that man of high status may be allowed to pass after giving him protection. This may be done openly or secretly. If (Sri Guru Gobind Singh) hesitated he should be conciliated, and persuaded (to continue his journey to the South). If (Sri Guru Gobind Singh) demands expenses of travelling he should be given cash money according to need from the wealth taken from that revered person.

— *K.S.*

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APPENDIX

GURPURB DATES ACCORDING TO PROPOSED NANAKSHAHI CALENDAR*

Name of the Guru	*Parkash Divas* (Birthday)	*Gurgaddi Divas* (Assumption of Guruship)	*Joti-Jot Divas* (Merging into Eternal Light)
Sri Guru Nanak Dev	1 *Vaisakh* (April 14)	From Parkash ——	8 *Asu* (Sept. 22)
Sri Guru Angad Dev	5 *Vaisakh* (April 18)	4 *Asu* (Sept. 18)	3 *Vaisakh* (April 16)
Sri Guru Amar Das	9 *Jeth* (May 23)	3 *Vaisakh* (April 16)	2 *Asu* (Sept. 16)
Sri Guru Ram Das	25 *Asu* (Oct. 9)	2 *Asu* (Sept. 16)	2 *Asu* (Sept. 16)
Sri Guru Arjun Dev	19 *Vaisakh* (May 2)	2 *Asu* (Sept. 16)	2 *Harh* (June 16)
Sri Guru Hargobind	21 *Harh* (July 5)	28 *Jeth* (June 11)	6 *Chet* (March 19)
Sri Guru Har Rai	19 *Magh* (Jan. 31)	1 *Chet* (March 14)	6 *Katak* (Oct. 20)
Sri Guru Harkrishan	8 *Sawan* (July 23)	6 *Katak* (Oct. 20)	3 *Vaisakh* (April 16)
Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur	5 *Vaisakh* (April 18)	3 *Vaisakh* (April 16)	11 *Maghar* (Nov. 24)
Sri Guru Gobind Singh	23 *Poh* (Jan. 5)	11 *Maghar* (Nov. 24)	7 *Katak* (Oct. 21)
Sri Guru Granth Sahib	17 *Bhadon* (Sept. 1)	6 *Katak* (Oct. 20)	Eternal

* An expert committee constituted by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and headed by Prof. Pal Singh Purewal, after going through astronomical, historical and other data, fixed these *Sammat* dates as the historical dates of *Gurpurbs*.

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GLOSSARY

AAD/ADI : First, from the beginning of time, e.g., Adi Granth.

AARTI : Hindu mode of worshiping of idols. The *Bani* named *aarti* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib shows the futility of Hindu mode of worship.

ABHIJIT : In Hindu astrology, a particular conjunction of planets regarded as auspicious.

ACHINT : Effortless, without worry.

AGYAN : Ignorance.

AHANKAR : Ego, I-am-ness.

AHIMSA : Hindu religious doctrine of non-injury.

AJUNI : Unborn.

AKAL : Eternal; immortal; a term used to describe God.

AKAL BUNGA : Lord's mansion; another name for Akal Takht.

AKALI : Worshipper of the Eternal God; earlier used for Nihangs, now-a-days refers to members of the Shiromani Akali Dal — a political party of the Sikhs.

AKAL TAKHT : The throne of the Almighty, the timeless throne, the highest seat of authority of the Sikh religion; the building erected by Sri Guru Hargobind opposite the Harmandir Sahib.

AKHARA : Arena, wrestling pit.

ALAHNIYAN : Songs in praise of someone, especially the departed. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, hymns in praise of *Waheguru*.

AMRIT : Sugar-puff mixed, *Bani*-consecrated water used in Sikh initiation ceremony.

AMRITDHARI : One who has been initiated as a Khalsa. Also see, *Khalsa*.

AMRIT VELA : Usually understood as about three hours before sunrise.

ANAND KARAJ : Literally, blissful task, the term is used for Sikh marriage ceremony.

ARDAS : An important Sikh prayer recited at the conclusion of a service; the word itself means supplication; Petition to God invoking His Grace.

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ASHRAM : Place associated with religious activities.

ASTPADI : Compositions in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, consisting of eight verses.

AST-SIDHI : In Hindu theological system, eight types of occult powers, which are described as nothing more than a mirage in *Gurbani.*

ATMA : The soul; the essence of *Waheguru* in His creation.

AVTAR : Incarnation of a deity, usually Vishnu.

BABA : Respectful term meaning 'grandfather'.

BAISAKHI : See Vaisakhi.

BAKHSHISH : Literally, grace. Preaching centres of Sikhs set up by Guru Har Rai.

BANI : See *Gurbani.*

BAOLI : Literally, water well for public use, without any discrimination, e.g., Sri Guru Amar Das set up one at Goindwal and Guru Arjun at Lahore.

BHAGAT/BHAKTA : Saint; man of God; devotee who adores God.

BHAGTI : Devotion, worship, meditation, religious obervances.

BHAI : Literally, brother. Term used for Sikhs of high spiritual attainments.

BHANA : Literally, a happening. Anything that happens in His Will.

BHAT : Literally, bard. There have been eleven bards whose compositions have been included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

BIR : Volume of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

BOLÉ SO NIHAL : First part if the Sikh war cry. It means, 'Everyone who says this shall achieve bliss'. For the meaning of the second part, see *Sat Sri Akal.*

BUDDH : Literally, wisdom, intelligence.

BUDHA : Literally, advanced in years.

CHARHDI KALA : The waxing mood; ever rising high spirits.

CHAR KHANI : Classification of living beings in four divisions - those born of egg, those born of womb, those born out of garbage, and those out of vegetation.

CHAUPADÉ : Verses in Sri Guru Granth Sahib consisting of four lines.

CHAURASI LAKH JOON : In Hindu theology, there are supposed to be 8.4 million species of living beings. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the term is used metaphorically to mean all species.

CHHANT : Lyrical composition consisting of four to six lines.

CHHATIH BHOJAN : In Indian subcontinental tradition, there are only thirty-six types of foods depending on taste, like, sweet, spicy, bitter, etc. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the term is used metaphorically to mean best of food, or sumptuous food.

DAMDAMA : The place where the Guru rested.

DARBAR SAHIB : The Lord's Court; used as a synonym for the Golden Temple, the Harmandir Sahib.

DASAM GRANTH : Lit. Tenth Book. An anthology of 1422 pages, compiled some two decades after the passing away of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Besides a few hymns of the Guru, the compilation includes contributions of a number of poets of his time.

DASWANDH : Tithe or one tenth of one's income; contribution towards common socio-religious development of society.

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DAYA : Compassion.

DÉGH : The cooking pot.

DHADHI : Traditional ballad-singers using *dhadh* (hand-drum) as an accompaniment.

DHARAM : Righteousness; moral law.

DHARAM KHAND : A hymn in the *Japji Sahib* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. It gives the description of the earth, our planet, which according to the Guru, is the place for practice of righteousness.

DHARAMSAL : Hostel for pilgrims; sometimes used as Prayer Hall. Literally, a place for righteous actions.

DHARAMYUDH : Battle for the cause of righteousness.

DIWALI : Festival of lights celebrated by the Hindus. Sikhs celebrate it as the day on which Guru Hargobind, after release from prison, arrived at Amritsar. In Sikh historical parlance, it means the no-moon night of the month of *Katak* in Bikrami calendar.

FAQIR : Muslim man of God. Literally, one without any worldly possessions.

GADDI RAH : Literally, the path marked by the wheels of a bullock cart. In Sikh theological understanding, this term means the path lived (hence marked for Sikhs) by the Gurus.

GRANTH : Literally, book.

GRANTHI : One who recites from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Frequently he may look after the gurdwara also, but he is not a priest. There is no priest class among Sikhs.

GURBANI (OR BANI) : The Revealed Word; the utterances of the Gurus and *bhagats* recorded in the *Adi Granth*; the Divine word received from God. See *Gursabad*.

GURDWARA : Literally, "Abode of the Guru"; a building that houses the sacred Sikh scripture.

GURGADDI : Throne of Guruship.

GURMATTA : The intention, resolution or will of the Guru expressed in a formal decision made by a representative assembly of Sikhs; a resolution of the *Sarbat Khalsa*.

GURMUKH : Literally, with face towards the Guru. Those people whose actions are guided by the Guru-consciousness. See *Sachiara*.

GURMUKHI : The script in which Sri Guru Granth Sahib is written. Literally, "from the mouth of the Guru".

GURSABAD : The divine word of the Guru; hymns from the sacred scripture of the Sikhs — Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

GURSHABAD : See *Gursabad*.

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB : The *Adi Granth*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs on which Guruship was conferred by Guru Gobind Singh after adding the hymns of his father, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur.

GURU KA LANGAR : "The Guru's Mess"; food served from the community kitchen of a gurdwara.

GURU PANTH : The corporate Guru of the Sikhs.

HAUMAIN : Self-exaltation; self-centredness; ego; I-am-ness.

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HUKAM (OR RAZA OR RAJA) : Divine Order; Command of God; Will of God.

JATHEDAR : Leader of a *Jatha* (contingent of Sikhs) : Chief or Head, e.g., *Jathedar* of the Akal Takht.

KACHI : Literally unripe; false; apocryphal.

KAKKAR : The five symbols enjoined on Sikhs, viz., *kachh* (breeches), *kara* (steel bangle) *kirpan* (sword or sabre), *kangha* (comb) and *kesh* (hair).

KHALSA DAL : The army of initiated Sikhs, the Khalsa; term used during the 18th century.

KHALSA PANTH : In the time of the Gurus, the Sikh *Panth* was a religious community. After the creation of the Khalsa by Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa became rulers of North India and the Khalsa *Panth* became the Sikh nation.

KIRPAN : Sword or sabre which a Khalsa when initiated is enjoined to carry on his/her person always.

KIRTAN : Devotional singing in praise of *Waheguru*.

LAKH : One hundred thousand, 100,000.

LANGAR : See *Guru ka Langar*.

MAHANT : Head of a Hindu *mandir* (temple)

MANJIS : 22 seats of religious authority (*manjis*) established by Sri Guru Amar Das. These were abolished by Sri Guru Gobind Singh because they had become corrupt.

MANMUKH : Literally, face towards self. Guided by one's own mind, rather than by the Guru's advice; self-oriented, irreligious.

MASSYA : No-moon night.

MIRI-PIRI : The Sikh doctrine of whole-life religion or complementarity and inseparability of spiritual and temporal aspects of life.

MISLS : Sikh confederacies in the eighteenth century which later consolidated to form the Sikh nation ruled by Ranjit Singh.

MITHYA : Illusion; Hindu doctrine that this earth is a place of suffering.

MOKSHA : Return of the soul for merger in Brahman, or a state of bliss and union with God, without involvement in the world of man; Hindu doctrine of liberation in this life.

MOOLMANTAR : The basic belief or the fundamental doctrine of the Sikh faith enunciated by Sri Guru Nanak Dev in *Japji Sahib*; the opening words of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

MORCHAS : Resistance or confrontation by unarmed *Jathas* (contingents) of Sikhs to wrest control of gurdwaras from corrupt Hindu *mahants*; anti-government agitation.

MUHARS : Former Indian gold coins.

MUKTI : Liberation; salvation; end of transmigration of soul and its union with God.

MUNJ : reed fibre used for making ropes

NAM, NAAM : God and *Naam* are Real, Eternal and Unfathomable. *Naam* may be called the immanent or the qualitative aspect of God, working and directing the manifest world described by the Sikh Gurus as unmanifest (*nirgun*) and manifest (*sargun*); the Highest Power, creating, informing, supporting and working the entire universe.

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Sikhs pray for the boon of *Naam*, i.e., linkage with God.

NAM SIMRAN : The daily worship or remembrance of God which Sikhs are enjoined to do.

NANAKPANTHIS : Term earlier used for Sri Guru Nanak Dev's disciples. Before the creation of Khalsa, Sikhs were known as Nanakpanthis.

NIRGUN SAMPARDAI : The Sant tradition of Nothern India.

NIRVAN, NIRVANA : Liberation, salvation, redemption, Buddhist term for *mukti*.

PANGAT : A line of devotees sitting on the floor for a meal from the Guru's kitchen attached to every gurdwara.

PANJ PIARÉ : Literally 'Five Beloveds'; the term originally used for the five Sikhs who offered to sacrifice their heads on a call from Sri Guru Gobind Singh on the Vaisakhi day in 1699. Currently used to refer to five Sikhs chosen to represent the community.

PANTH : Literally path or way; Sikh *Panth* means the entire community following the Sikh way of life.

PARSAD : Kindness, grace, favour. *Karah prasad* is consecrated pudding distributed in a gurdwara, symbolising the Guru's kindness.

PATSHAHI : Political sovereignty.

PHUNHÉ : Poetic composition in which first line consists of 11 *matras* and second of 10.

POTHI : Book, *granth*.

PUJARI : A Hindu priest.

PURANMASSI : Full-moon night.

RAGIS : Hymn-singers who perform *kirtan*, the singing of devotional songs and hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

RAHIT MARYADA : Disciplinary Code of the Khalsa issued by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

RAHITNAMA : Book containing the original disciplinary Code of the Khalsa. There are several published in the eighteenth century.

RAJ JAATI : People of royal lineage; people destined to rule.

RAJ KAREGA KHALSA : The Khalsa shall rule.

RAZA : See *Hukam*.

SABAD : Divine Word of the Gurus received from God; refers to the sacred words appearing in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

SACH or SAT : True or Truth. Also used as a name for Waheguru as well as to describe that Waheguru is not an abstraction but a reality.

SACH ACHAR : Truthful living enjoined by the Sikh Gurus.

SACHIARA (or GURMUKH) : One who lives truthfully; God-conscious man.

SAMSARA : The world, universe, the creation as a whole; mundane existence.

SANGAT : A Sikh gathering; assembly; congregation.

SANT MAT : Sant tradition of Nothern India; a sect of Hinduism.

SANT-SIPAHI (or SAINT-SOLDIER) : Who is prepared to fight for justice or a noble cause as an expression of his devotion to God.

SARBAT DA BHALA : Welfare of all; peace and prosperity for all.

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SARBAT KHALSA : An assembly of all the Khalsa. In the eighteenth century, the *misls* used to hold *Sarbat Khalsa* meetings.

SATGURU : Literally true Guru; Eternal Guru or God; frequently used for the Sikh Gurus.

SAT SRI AKAL : The second part of the Sikh war cry. It means, 'The Timeless Lord is True and Real'. For the meaning of the first part, see *Bolé so Nihal.*

SAWAIYYÉ : Religious text; panegyric; an eulogy; laudation, a form of poetry.

SEWADAR : Attendant.

SHAKTI : Power; strength; might; energy; authority.

VAISAKHI : The harvest season festival observed on 13th April each year. It is also the day on which Sri Guru Gobind Singh initiated the Sikhs as the Khalsa.

VARNA ASHRAM DHARMA : The Hindu caste system, which divides human beings into four major castes, based on the principle of inequality of human beings based on birth.

ZULUM : Persecution; tyranny; torture.

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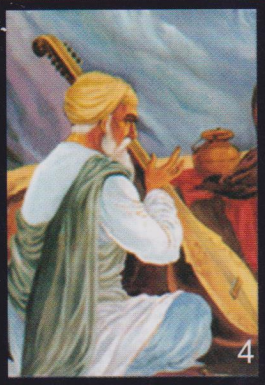
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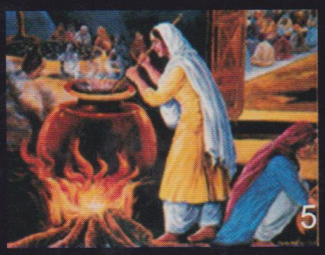
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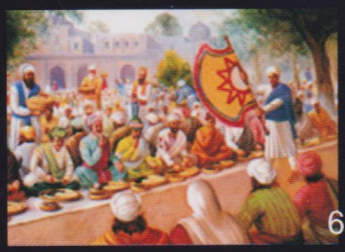
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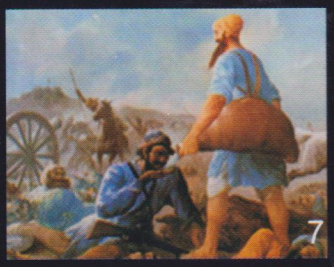
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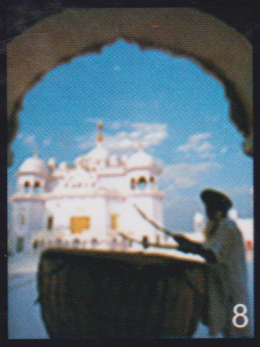
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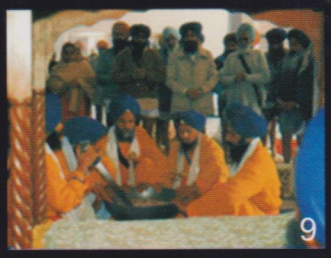
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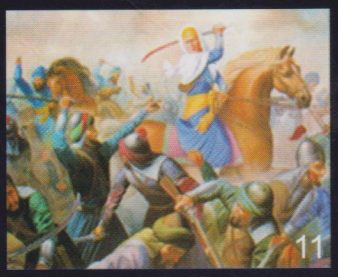
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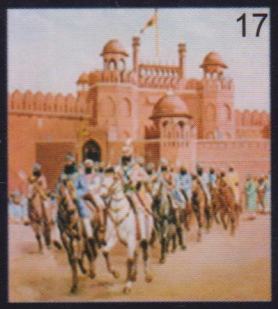
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